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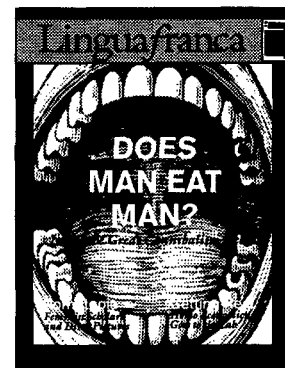
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Editorial

No More Free Education

In Britain, a free university education has always been considered a right, especially by the elite who sent their offspring to expensive "public" schools so that they could get into Oxford or Cambridge. The system ran smoothly. Until the '60s, only one in 10 young people went to university. Those who did became part of Britain's ruling elite, so the government willingly made the investment.

Now, three in 10 young people go to university, and to maintain Britain's position in the world economy, that number must greatly increase, say members of Tony Blair's new government. But Blair claims that the government doesn't have the funds to pay for it. So he is proposing a uniform \$1,500 tuition for university, turning what was a right into a commodity.

In an effort to bring the huge number of under-educated, unemployed youth into the modern market, the government will not make the very poor pay. Still, the imposition of fees is a major step in what the former principal of Leeds Metropolitan University calls "a further shift ... away from the state-funded European tradition towards the American market model." More generally,

it is an example of a basic tendency of mature corporate capitalism to saddle citizens with the cost of what was once considered society's responsibility.

Not long ago, increases in productivity and the growth of capital brought with them improvements in the general national welfare—better public schools, free state universities, enhanced Social Security, universal health care and well-maintained national parks. In short, the larger society shared in the success of industry owners. Now, however, even as giant corporations enjoy unprecedented growth and prosperity, all forms of

social benefits are under attack, allegedly because there is no money available for their upkeep or further development.

These policies are, of course, associated with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. It is doubly ironic that they are finding continued expression in Britain, where the victory of the Labor Party had been touted as a crushing defeat for Thatcherism and when Britain's economy is doing better than that of any other major European nation. But Blair comes from the Clinton mold. He campaigned as a "modernizer," meaning he was willing to erode the social gains of the past 50 years in favor of corporate growth and expansion. Like Clinton, he is a social liberal and a creature of his wealthy backers, who, as long as their

interests and prerogatives are protected and enhanced, care little about issues dear to social conservatives.

Blair says he is imposing tuition fees now because the overall education budget is fixed, while the number of students is rapidly expanding. But there is no iron-clad law that keeps the overall budget frozen. Given his large majority in parliament, Blair could easily increase education funding.

In the United States, the issue of access to higher education is more complicated because tuition fees are set at the local level. But the principle is the same. At a time of strong economic growth, there is no reason for governments to be hiking tuition fees and imposing other charges at state colleges and universities.

Society has already divided in two: the truly prosperous and those barely scraping by. This widening social chasm is not the result of forces beyond our control but of specific public policy decisions made by the government. ■

*As more Brits
go to university,
Labor Prime
Minister Tony
Blair pulls the
plug on free
tuition.*

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Cover illustration by Estelle Carol

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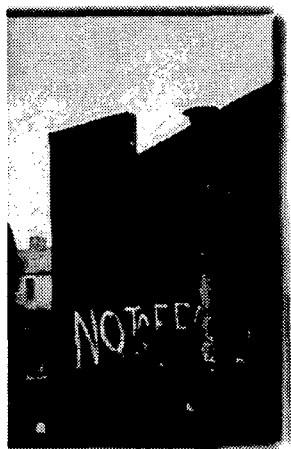
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BY BETH SCHULMAN



Cambodian History

It is distressing to see *In These Times* giving Adam Fifield space to misrepresent Noam Chomsky's position on Cambodia and to give *ITT* readers a "patriotic" history of Cambodia ("Ghosts of Cambodia," July 28), which we expect to find in *Time*, not in *ITT*.

On Chomsky (and implicitly this writer, who co-authored all of Chomsky's major writings on Cambodia), Fifield says, "As news of Khmer Rouge atrocities began to filter into the press, Western scholars, including Noam Chomsky, disparaged the accounts as fabrications aimed at demonizing Pol Pot's noble peasant revolution." In fact, we never disparaged "the accounts" in general, many of which we believed to be true; we did, however, document major forgeries and fabrications that were treated with extraordinary gullibility by the mainstream media.

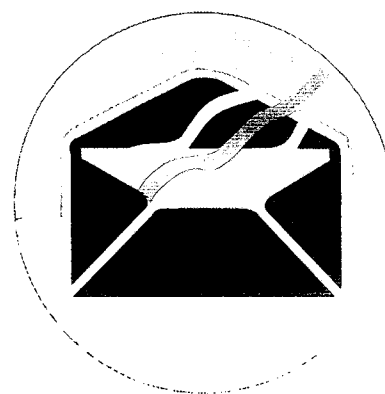
The propaganda campaign and lies we were contesting didn't help the Cambodians one iota, and we believe they were not designed to help them, but were to aid in reconstructing an imperial ideology damaged by the Vietnam War. We discovered that while it was entirely legitimate to criticize opponents of the Indochina wars for errors and lies, to criticize supporters and apologists made one a "defender of Pol Pot [or Hanoi]." Fifield's suggestion that we were defending "Pol Pot's noble peasant revolution" was a regular falsification of establish-

ment hacks some years back.

The heart of the patriotic history of Cambodia is maintaining an exclusive focus on the Khmer Rouge as villain, keeping the United States in the background and even as the appropriate adjudicator in the area. In serious analyses, like the Finnish government's Inquiry Commission study, there was a "decade of the genocide," phase one of which preceded the victory of the Khmer Rouge, with the United States the de facto genocidist. The Finnish study estimates 600,000 killed with 2 million refugees created in the first (U.S.) phase and 50,000 to 150,000 executed and roughly a million dead overall in the second (Khmer Rouge) phase from 1975 to 1978.

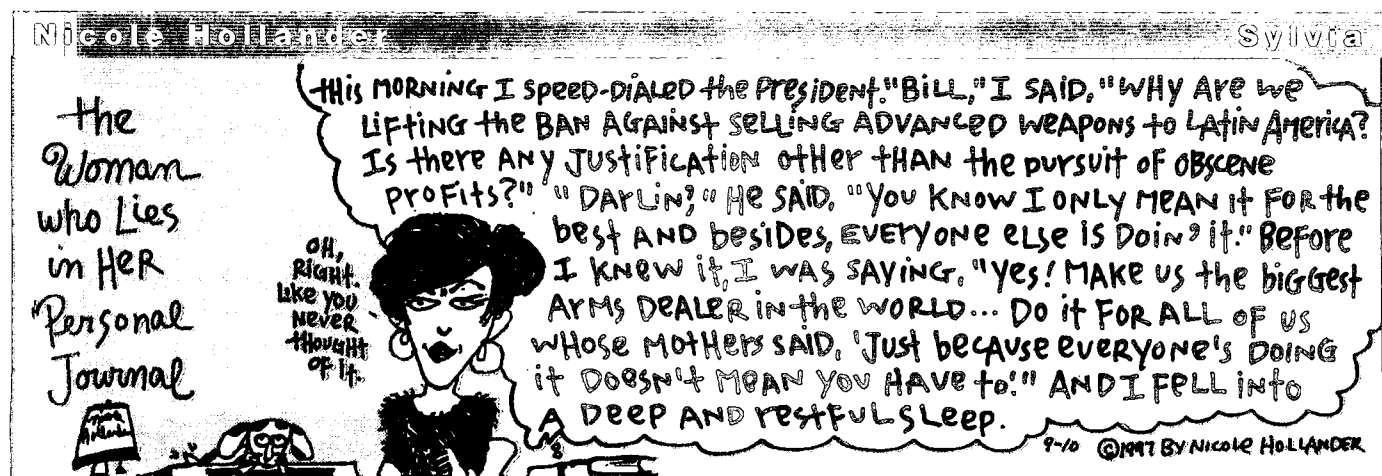
Fifield does acknowledge that the United States did some nasty things, "pursuing the Viet Cong" into Cambodia in the early '70s (actually, the United States invaded in the '60s and was heavily bombing Cambodian villages early in 1969), and dropping over 500,000 tons of bombs and "killing as many as 150,000 innocent people." Not only does Fifield give a low estimate of deaths, but he fails to mention the U.S. participation in the overthrow of Sihanouk, the invasion of Cambodia by its puppet government in Saigon, the 2 million refugees, and the enormous devastation and trauma of phase one.

One of the tricks of apologists for the U.S. role in Cambodia is to assume normal



conditions prevailed when the Khmer Rouge took over in April 1975, so that all deaths and killings thereafter were strictly by Pol Pot's plan. "The Khmer Rouge used the American bombing campaign as fodder to foment their communist revolution," says Fifield, implying that the U.S. assault didn't itself affect the attitudes of the many hundreds of thousands of victims, but only provided propaganda fodder. Cambodia was a devastated country in April 1975, and high U.S. officials were already predicting a million deaths from starvation before the Khmer Rouge took over. All serious analysts agree that the first phase of the genocide radicalized the people of rural Cambodia.

Another claim of the establishment propaganda machine, regurgitated by Fifield, is that "we are implicated for our silence." In fact, within a month of the Khmer Rouge takeover in 1975, there were cries in the U.S. media of "genocide," and the propaganda campaign reached a remarkable crescendo in 1977. Fifield misses the true silence, and contributes to it today: While the first phase of the genocide was going on, under U.S. auspices, the media were truly silent on what was



Letters

happening to Cambodian victims. As the media placed phase one in the black hole, there has never been any call for bringing Nixon and Kissinger to trial for war crimes, and the point never occurs to Fifield either.

Fifield is equally disingenuous in dealing with the post-1978 treatment of the Khmer Rouge. He does say that "in the early '80s, in its effort to perpetuate the Vietnam war, the United States supported an anti-Vietnamese military coalition that included the Khmer Rouge." How very antiseptic! Fifield fails to mention that the United States helped rebuild the Khmer Rouge army, voted regularly for Pol Pot to maintain his seat in the United Nations, and bargained aggressively in the early '90s to have the Khmer Rouge included in the coalition government being organized in Cambodia.

By writing off the first phase of the genocide and minimizing the U.S. role in subsequent years, Fifield leaves the criminality only in the convenient villain named by the U.S. political establishment.

Edward S. Herman
Penn Valley, Pa.

Adam Fifield replies: Over the years, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have attacked a number of journalists—including Sydney Schanberg and William Shawcross—whose reporting on Cambodia contradicted their worldview. So I consider myself in good company.

Herman does not indicate that my piece was largely a review of a photo exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, with a brief discussion of pertinent events in Cambodian history. If I had more than two or three paragraphs to elaborate on America's bloody and shameful role in Cambodia, I would have done so. The fact that I did not use every one of my scant 1,400 words to discuss U.S. complicity in the Cambodian holocaust means, in Herman's eyes, that I am an apologist for the United States and part of the notorious "propaganda campaign." This charge is ludicrous.

I stand by what I said about Chomsky. I did not intend to imply that he supported genocide in Cambodia, but he and Herman refuse to admit that in the late '70s, they seriously misassessed events

in Cambodia. In an essay published in the June 25, 1977 issue of *The Nation* and in a chapter on Cambodia in their 1979 book *After the Cataclysm*, they go to great lengths to cast doubts on "tales of Communist atrocities" filtering out of Cambodia. They then lay all the blame at the feet of the U.S. government for what hardship they do acknowledge. By suggesting that refugees' reports of the killings were not reliable and by giving the Pol Pot regime the benefit of the doubt, Chomsky and Herman helped undermine efforts to forge a vigorous international response to the massacres.

The numbers I cite—150,000 civilians killed in the American bombing campaign and up to 2 million who died during the years of Pol Pot's rule—come from Ben Kiernan, program director of Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program.

Ethnic Epithets

I was disappointed with your choice of headline for my book review of Joel Simon's *Endangered Mexico: An Environment on the Edge* (July 28). The phrase "the dirty truth about Mexico" immediately evokes still-powerful ethnic and nationalist epithets. The title's insensitive combination of the words "dirty" and "Mexico" reflects a broader problem. As the recently renewed trade-policy debate shows, many U.S. progressives still resort to a nationalist discourse about the need to protect "American families" from foreign threats. The review alluded to our need to think about why consolidating binational U.S.-Mexican movement coalitions has proven so difficult. Considering the rapid pace of integration between the United States and Mexico at the elite level, social movements are still lagging far behind. To begin to catch up, U.S. progressives need to learn to talk about Mexico and Mexicans in ways that challenge rather than reinforce deeply rooted prejudices.

Jonathan Fox
Santa Cruz, Calif.



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Letters

environment

Drastic Cutbacks at Greenpeace USA

BY DON HAZEN

Greenpeace USA, the immensely popular and influential environmental organization known for its aggressive direct-action campaigns and promotional flair, is in turmoil. In a drastic move, the Washington, D.C.-based organization plans to reduce its 400-person staff to a mere 65 and to close down all 10 of its field offices, a downsizing of unprecedented scope in the environmental movement.

This dramatic move was made by the Greenpeace USA board of directors, reportedly under strong pressure from Thilo Bode, executive director of Greenpeace International. The restructuring was blamed on budget problems that have plagued Greenpeace USA for years, but have been exacerbated by declining fundraising revenue in the Clinton era and perhaps a faded Greenpeace image. In the face of growing deficits, the group's \$29.5 million annual budget will be slashed to \$20.1 million.

But under the surface burns a fundamental fissure in the far-flung Greenpeace family: a culture clash between the old-style, European model of direct action and focus on large-scale international issues, and more recent efforts by Greenpeace USA at grass-roots environmental organizing. The contrast is between macho but effective symbolic actions—saving whales and fighting nuclear testing—versus Greenpeace USA's evolution into a multifaceted organization deeply concerned with issues of environmental justice. While the turmoil is far from over, the resignation of Greenpeace USA Executive

Director Barbara Dudley in May and the installation of a three-member transitional team that is sympathetic to Bode suggest that the organization will return to the direct-action model.

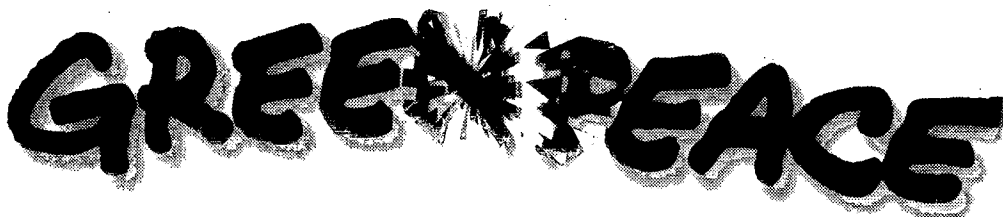
Greenpeace USA's success over the last decade enabled it to keep Greenpeace International at arm's length. In 1991, Greenpeace USA had a budget in the neighborhood of \$50 million and more than 2 million members. However, its steadily declining economic fortune and dwindling membership—currently down to 450,000—made it vulnerable to Greenpeace International's increased influence.

What brought the organization to this

essential to its character.

In response to the restructuring, the group of current and former staff who vote for the board of directors has petitioned for a meeting with the board on September 13. Many of the group's 170-plus members—including some who were recently laid off—are angry. Yet it's unclear how much power the staff wields. Only the board can determine how resources are allocated. In any event, the era of Greenpeace USA as a large-scale, free-spending, diverse organization grappling with the full plate of U.S. environmental problems is over.

The turmoil at Greenpeace is bound



point, in part, reflects many of the problems facing large membership advocacy groups in the United States today. In Greenpeace's case, it was a constant balancing act trying to combine a grass-roots operation with a membership base recruited by direct mail and telemarketing. Greenpeace always has been proud that almost all of its funding came via door-to-door canvassing and direct mail. Only two percent of its budget came from foundation grants. If the group had sought more foundation support, however, Greenpeace USA likely wouldn't be facing this crisis. But Greenpeace USA saw the values of independence from foundations and a continuous grass-roots presence as

to have repercussions in movement politics. Thousands of activists in organizations around the world, in addition to the current staff, have cut their organizing teeth at Greenpeace. Greenpeace has been the model of bold, media-savvy actions that encouraged hope and conscience in many.

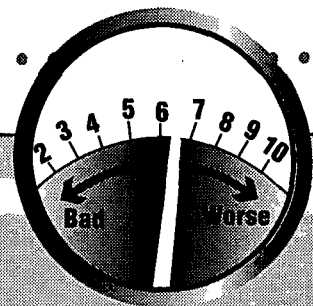
"Whatever they do," says former director Dudley, "they should move out of Washington. If Greenpeace is to have an effective role in the future, it shouldn't be walking the halls inside of the Beltway." ■

Don Hazen is executive director of the Institute for Alternative Journalism and former publisher of Mother Jones.

appall-o-meter

BY DAVID FUTRELLE

The In These Times Index of Indeçencies



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Two Hail Marys and a decaf mocha 8.3

It can "travel worldwide, transcend cultural barriers," offer isolated individuals a "powerful connecting experience ... an emotional connection point," and allow people to see that they're "part of a larger mission." Is it religious belief? Philosophical tradition? Stirring humanitarian visions? Nope. Scott Bedbury is talking about a brand name. In a recent issue of the business magazine *Fast Company*, Bedbury waxes poetic about his experience creating "brand awareness" for such companies as Nike and Starbucks. "With Starbucks, we see how coffee has woven itself into the fabric of people's lives, and that's our opportunity for emotional leverage," he explains. "People have always needed to make sense of things at a higher level. We all want to think that we're a piece of something bigger than ourselves. Companies that manifest that sensibility in their employees and consumers invoke something very powerful."

Lost in the clouds 5.2

Of course, not everyone can find spiritual guidance in their iced frappuccino. So some questing spirits in search of nirvana might want to turn not to Starbucks but to the Weather Channel. For what brings us together better than the weather? A new set of commercials for the cable network introduces us to a mythical "weather bar," where patrons gather to compare notes on stationary fronts and Doppler radar. The cable channel, you see, is trying not just to provide the five-day forecast but to win our hearts and minds as well. "We found that we do very well as a brand in delivering functional benefits," Steve Clapp, Weather Channel vice president for strategic marketing, told the *New York Times*. "We needed to establish an emotional relationship, too." The new ads, Clapp explains, are designed to "communicate our passion for weather and try to make that emotional connection to the viewers."

Capitalist tools 6.3

Need the perfect gift for that paranoid CEO in your life? A recent ad in *The Robb Report—Magazine for the Affluent Lifestyle*, a publication targeted at the inordinately wealthy, offers executives covert video systems that are "CIA Tested. CIA Approved." "Find out exactly where your employees' loyalties lie with one of our high-performance hidden cameras," the ad promises. Using pin-hole cameras hidden in "fully functional" clock radios, smoke detectors or picture

frames, the busy executive can "monitor office and home activities in real-time or record them for later viewing." Now that's entertainment!

Rainbow coalition 9.1

Bill Clinton seems to have backed away from the notion of offering African-Americans an "apology" for slavery. Some politicians, however, never quite understood what all the fuss was about. As Rep. Joe Skeen (R-N.M.) puts it, "we all get along fine." "It seems rather strange for [Clinton] to [offer to] apologize," Skeen told the *Albuquerque Journal*. "The people who sold these folks into slavery were their own tribal leaders. ... The problem began there. ... Anybody that wants to go back to Africa—or ethnic groups that want to go back where they came from—we'll be happy to fund the fare." ■

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labor

Better Latté Than Never

BY JEFFERSON DECKER

Starbucks, which employs more than 23,000 employees worldwide, settled a labor dispute with the 116 "employee-partners" who staff 10 of its 96 stores in British Columbia. The employees, who organized through the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) last October, are the only Starbucks baristas with a collective pact.

The agreement boosts starting wages by 75 cents—to \$7.75 Canadian (\$5.55 U.S.)—with an additional 12-cent shot

in July 1998. Just as important, according to CAW Local 3000 President Denise Kellahan, are new rules that permit union employees to schedule shifts according to seniority, which makes it easier for experienced workers to approach a consistent 40-hour week.

The deal capped negotiations that lasted the better part of nine months. Tensions foamed up into an "unstrike" in May, as employees worked their shifts out of uniform and leafleted customers

("To the barricades, baristas!" June 16).

Following the deal, Starbucks immediately announced that it would raise the wages of its other Canadian employees, matching those of the CAW-organized stores in British Columbia. Starbucks spokesman Alan Gulick said the move was not intended to deter non-union employees from organizing. "This is a matter of being fair and equitable to all of our partners," he said.

Kellahan says the move shows other employees what organizing can accomplish: "Ten stores created a raise for the entire country." ■

Whistleblowing Woes

BY JIM YOUNG

More than 3,000 workers who complain about dangerous job conditions are fired or otherwise retaliated against each year. Yet despite a protective statute on the books, whistleblowers can't count on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to defend them.

OSHA's section 11(c) is intended to protect workers who report hazards from discrimination by employers. The statute requires OSHA to investigate complaints and make referrals to U.S. District Courts, where employers can be forced to reinstate workers with back wages. However, according to a Labor Department audit released in June, the law leaves many workers "vulnerable to reprisals." The audit, which looked at 653 11(c) cases filed in 1995, found that 77 percent of workers who filed 11(c) complaints either withdrew their claims or saw them closed without an attempt by OSHA to seek reinstatement or back pay.

More disheartening, says Joanne Royce, an attorney with the Government Accountability Project, is the small fraction of cases that go to trial. In 1993, the most recent year for which data are available, 3,328 complaints were filed under section 11(c), but only 14 cases were referred to U.S. District Courts for trial.

"We've got a statute that presents us with some real problems," acknowledges Thomas J. Buckley, director of OSHA's Office of Investigative Assistance, which investigates whistleblower complaints filed under 11(c) and 10 other federal statutes. He notes that section 11(c) offers no right to refuse hazardous work and no fines against employers, and that workers cannot use it as a basis for a lawsuit. Furthermore, Buckley says, the burden of proof on the employee is "heavy" in 11(c) cases, which must be referred to a federal court (instead of to an administrative

law judge as in cases under eight other whistleblower statutes), where rules of evidence are very restrictive.

"OSHA's is the most invoked federal whistleblower protection," Royce says, adding that because OSHA covers the entire private sector, 11(c) complaints outnumber whistleblower retaliation cases under all other federal statutes combined.

Royce argues that OSHA's whistleblower protection is strong enough, and that it's the agency's enforcement that is weak. "I've seen cases with tons of proof," she says. "OSHA is just not referring them for trial."

Mike Ivancich, director of health and safety for Local 1-2 of the Utility Workers Union of America, which represents 11,000 Consolidated Edison workers in New York City, says OSHA inspectors discourage use of section 11(c).

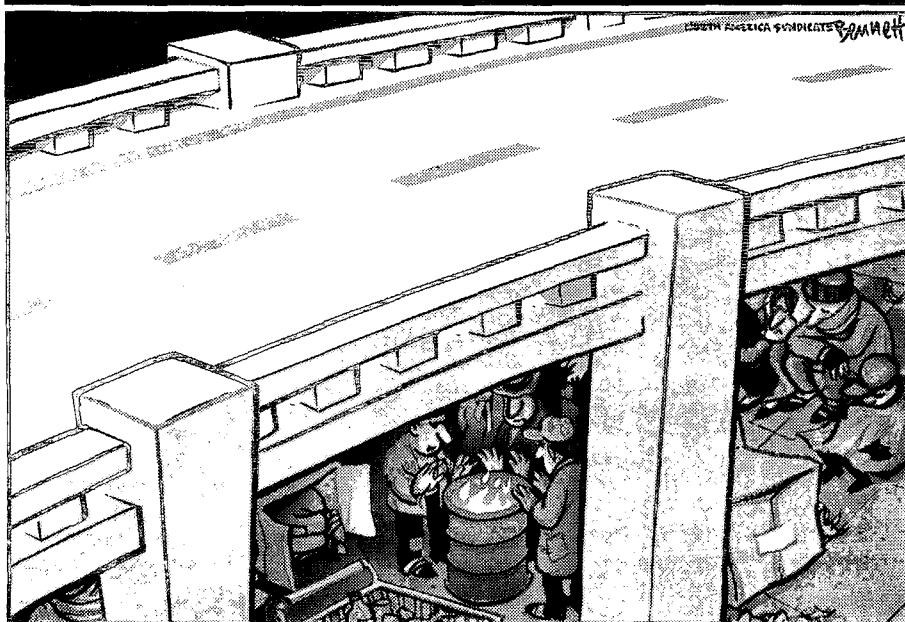
"They'll tell you right when they come in that there's not much they can do if someone has been fired, demoted or harassed," he says.

In response to the audit and pressure from organized labor, Greg Watchman, acting OSHA director, sent a memo on August 5 to the agency's regional administrators, urging them to respond more aggressively to 11(c) complaints.

OSHA's 2,000 inspectors can't possibly safeguard the nation's 6 million private-sector workplaces. Thus, empowering workers to sound the alarm is crucial to the agency's success. Yet unless there is a dramatic change in 11(c) enforcement policy, whistleblowers will remain fair game for angry supervisors and employers. ■

Jim Young is a freelance labor writer based in New York City.

Clay Bennett



The Bridge to the 21st Century



Business-as-usual Labor Coverage

BY JANINE JACKSON

Last month's Teamsters strike against United Parcel Service forced the media to report on the shake-down in the American workplace. There on the front page was a fact normally obscured by the corporate-owned press corps: The underside of the celebrated "flexibility" of U.S. businesses is millions of "underemployed" and underpaid Americans.

The 185,000 striking carters, loaders and sorters had specific problems with UPS, including the company's failure, despite huge profits, to convert part-time jobs to full-time ones or to raise part-time wages that had been frozen for 15 years. But they were also protesting a whole way of doing business that boosts profits but erodes well-being by making more workers temporary or part-time. And for a week or so, they had the media's attention.

But even as the media reported on the issues the union brought to the table, there were limits to how far they would go in challenging any aspect of corporate policy. The strike coverage still showed the mainstream media's identification with the interests of employers and investors.

USA Today argued in an editorial that UPS's increasing use of part-timers "makes practical business sense." To make any of those part-time jobs full-time would make the company "less efficient," the paper explained. "And that won't do either the company, its customers or workers any good."

Time didn't bother with economic analysis. The magazine headlined its strike account, "The Perils of Ron Carey." Predictably, it shortchanged the story of the strikers' concerns in order to speculate on what the personal fallout of losing would be for the "desperate"

Teamsters president under investigation for alleged election misdeeds. (This must be considered an advance for *Time*, which began a 1993 article on the Teamsters with an allusion to "spaghetti-sucking Mob bosses.")

Beyond emphasizing that unions aren't the solution, many outlets flat-out denied that underemployment is even a problem. "The facts don't back up the unions' concerns," wrote the *Houston Chronicle's* business columnist, because Labor Department statistics show that the "huge majority" of part-timers don't even want full-time jobs. The *Chronicle* didn't mention that such studies often count as "full-time" people who cobble together two part-time jobs into a full week's work, much less ask whether "voluntary" part-timers are happy with their pay or benefit levels.

Even *New York Times* reporter Steven Greenhouse's moderate analysis that the strike was emblematic of an "inevitable clash" between labor and proponents of

a downsized, just-in-time economy was undercut by his own bosses: The *Times'* editorial line was that the Teamsters/UPS battle held "little significance for the economy or for most other companies."

Why did the public support such a supposedly meaningless action? "Because Mr. Carey's rhetoric about part-time work, no matter how off-base, resonated with a lot of people," the *Washington Post* explained.

But try as they might, the establishment media couldn't explain away the significance of the Teamsters strike, or cancel it out with gleeful coverage of financial misdealings by Carey's election campaign. And at least for a couple of weeks, we got to hear the voices of ordinary working people—the people who are usually erased from mainstream media's view of the economic world. ■

Janine Jackson is research director at *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)*.

online

- Public Campaign (www.publiccampaign.org) offers a clearinghouse for news, commentary and information about campaign finance reform. The site features "The Money Meter," a running tally of dollars spent on 1998 congressional races.
- A diverse group of politicians and pundits, from George McGovern and Zbigniew Brzezinski to Nadine Strossen and Tony Snow, contributes essays and ideas to www.intellectualcapital.com, where visitors can join in the policy debates.
- Ah, the irony. Proclaiming "life was better before sliced bread," Luddites Online (www.luddites.com) provides a Web haven for technophobes. The site points out that the demands of the original Luddites don't differ much from those of modern unions—reasonable wages, better working conditions and product quality.

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The Socialist and the Banker

Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan went head-to-head before the House Banking Subcommittee on July 22, in what Greenspan called "the most challenging hearing I've been at in a long time." The following is an excerpt from their exchange:

SANDERS: We managed to raise the minimum wage. But given the fact that the minimum wage is 25 percent lower today than it was in 1970, and American workers remain at the bottom end of the wage scale in terms of low-wage workers throughout the world, would you join me in supporting legislation that I've introduced to raise the minimum wage to \$6.50 an hour?

GREENSPAN: I would not. I think it is terribly important that we allow people at whatever levels they are able to earn to get into the work force and move themselves up. In my judgment, the prohibition on allowing people to have a lower wage when that's the only one that they will get I think eliminates them from the capability of moving up the ladder. ...

SANDERS: ... So you're telling us today you oppose raising the minimum

wage for low-income workers. You support eliminating the capital gains tax, which largely benefits the rich. And then you want us to move toward a balanced budget. And if we do those things, it will require major cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education I suspect, Social Security, which benefits working families. How can you tell us you want to move toward a balanced budget and then continue to give huge tax breaks to the rich?

GREENSPAN: First of all, let's remember, what you're talking about are issues which have got nothing to do with the Federal Reserve. It's got nothing to do with monetary policy. You're asking my personal views.

SANDERS: I'm asking your personal views.

GREENSPAN: The reason why I have been opposed to the capital gains tax, as I've said on numerous occasions, is I think it is a means of raising revenue, which, more than any other tax I know, curbs economic growth and rising standards of living. ...

SANDERS: But under your leadership, over the last 20 years, we have significantly lowered taxes for the rich and large corporations. The rich have gotten richer and real wages have declined. That doesn't seem to me that you are making a lot of sense.

GREENSPAN: Under my leadership?

SANDERS: Well, you are one of the major economic leaders of this country. You have advocated tax breaks for the rich. You have opposed raising the minimum wage. The rich have gotten richer.

GREENSPAN: ... I don't advocate tax rates for the rich. I advocate tax structure which expands growth at the maximum means possible to help all Americans. ■



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nuclear waste

Radioactive Party

BY PAT ARNOW

The Southeast Compact, a group of state officials and industry representatives, held a meeting at Perdido Beach, Ala., last month to discuss a proposed toxic waste dump more than 700 miles away in North Carolina.

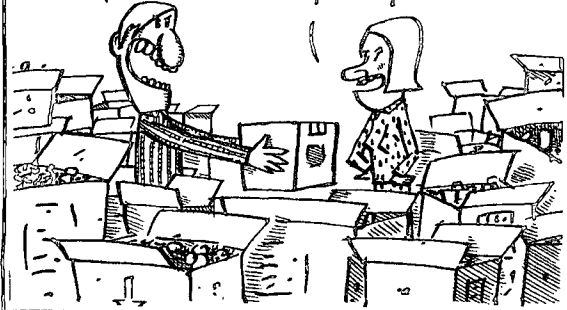
Protesting the remote location of the meeting, two dozen members of a North Carolina watchdog group staged a mock beach party, complete with lawn chairs, umbrellas and a wading pool, back in Durham. "Out of the 36 meetings, they've only been in this area twice," says Jim Warren, director of North Carolina Waste Awareness and Reduction Network (NC WARN), which objects to the dump because of the danger of radioactive leakage or exposure.

Richard Hodes, chairman of the compact, says that the group rotates meetings, so that each of the seven Southeastern states involved in toxic waste disposal can host a meeting. Warren estimates it would have cost more than \$700 to send a representative to the Alabama meeting.

At the meeting, the compact voted to spend up to \$10 million in utility industry funds for further planning. Over the last decade, Warren says, the compact has already spent more than \$100 million in state taxes and utility-ratepayer money on the plan to dispose of low-level radioactive waste. ■

Peter Hannan Huge Mouth

Those movers'll have some serious explaining to do if this last box doesn't contain the cat.
And the kids too, by golly.



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Fight Over Fast Track Authority

BY CRAIG AARON

President Clinton's plan to introduce legislation to reinstate fast track authority in trade negotiations has turned into a referendum on NAFTA, and free trade groups and their fair trade opponents are gearing up for a showdown this fall.

Congress gave Clinton fast track authority to negotiate NAFTA and the Uruguay round of GATT. Clinton now wants it for upcoming negotiations to expand NAFTA to include Chile and then other Latin American countries. Under fast track, trade agreements negotiated by the president must be ratified by Congress with a straight vote—all or nothing—bypassing regular committee procedures, limiting debate, and prohibiting any amendments, including additional labor or environmental protections.

Four years ago, The Business Roundtable, an association of CEOs, spent millions on pro-NAFTA propaganda through the lobbying group USA-NAFTA. Now it's pouring money into a new mouthpiece, America Leads On Trade (ALOT).

In an ALOT fundraising letter obtained by Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, the heads of Caterpillar, Boeing, Procter & Gamble, TRW, Chrysler and General Motors ask other CEOs to donate \$100,000 a piece to "insure that the voice of the business community is heard." ALOT figures it needs \$3 million to sway public opinion and garner enough votes for fast track passage. ALOT plans a three-pronged attack through direct lobbying in Washington, advertising in key congressional districts and a nationwide grass-roots campaign.

"The free traders bring to bear enormous resources to manufacture grass-

Progressive Challenge Plans January Kickoff

BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

The Progressive Challenge, the cooperative venture between the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the public interest community, is planning a January event to unveil the Fairness Agenda for America. Organizers hope the agenda, the left's answer to the Republican Contract with America, will revitalize the progressive wing of the Democratic Party and serve as a model for a new party platform.

Leading up to the conference in Washington, the Progressive Challenge is seeking endorsements from progressive leaders and organizations for its eight-point agenda (see "A Progressive Agenda," June 30). The agenda covers the national budget, workers' rights, discrimination, the global economy, demilitarization, environmental justice, social investment and campaign-finance reform.

The 58-member Progressive Caucus plans to raise its public profile this fall with a series of Capitol Hill symposiums for public interest groups and congressional staff members, which will examine agenda items and corresponding legislative initiatives. This month the emphasis will be on NAFTA fast track authority and the global economy. In October, job issues will be the focus. Then in November, the Progressive Challenge will spotlight campaign-finance reform, specifically the public financing proposals of Public Campaign.

Meanwhile, Americans for Democratic Action is preparing a book-length version of the Fairness Agenda. This handbook will be used at the Progressive Challenge candidate-training forum to be held in conjunction with the January kickoff. The forum will focus on developing electoral campaigns based on Fairness Agenda issues. Progressive Challenge organizers expect to recruit candidates for 10 to 15 congressional races in 1998.

For more information on Fairness Agenda endorsements, call Karen Dolan at (202) 234-9382, ext. 228. For more information on the candidate-training forum call Chris Riddiough at (202) 726-0745. ■

roots support," says Mike Dolan, Global Trade Watch field director. "They're getting themselves the best Astroturf that money can buy."

Dolan is confident, however, that fair trade forces got the jump on big business in the fast track debate, with paid organizers in 15 states and an extensive, "real grass-roots" volunteer network. But he says the biggest boost to opposi-

tion groups has been NAFTA itself. Public opinion of NAFTA is low, and members of Congress seeking political cover see a vote against fast track as a chance to rebuff the administration for failing to provide environmental protections and job gains.

"NAFTA hasn't fulfilled its promises," Dolan says. "We should be fixing it, not expanding it." ■

Taylor Takes Control

BY JAMES CIMENT

Charles Taylor, Liberia's newly inaugurated president, spent his first weeks in office telling Liberians that the treasury was broke and drugs were a "hideous crime."

Never mind, say members of the main opposition party, that it was former faction leader Taylor who plundered the nation's resources and doped his teenage soldiers before sending them into battle in the seven-year civil war he launched in 1989.

Not that this irony escaped voters. But most reckoned that a vote against Taylor, the most powerful and ambitious of the former faction leaders, was a vote for more warfare. While hundreds of international monitors pronounced the elections on July 19 "free and fair," Taylor's campaign chant told a different story: "He killed my ma, he killed my pa, he burned my house. I gonna vote for dat man."

Taylor made a fortune smuggling hardwoods, iron and rubber during the war (he is estimated to be worth as much as \$300 million) and spent lavishly on his campaign. During helicopter tours of the country, he tossed out bags of rice and T-shirts by the thousands. His radio station KISS-FM, the only nationwide broadcaster, was a nonstop Taylor infomercial, featuring rap, reggae and traditional African songs written in his honor.

Taylor's only serious opponent was the Unity Party's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a New York-based U.N. official and virtual foreigner in her own country. In the end, she won the educated vote—all 15 percent of it.

Under the interim election law, Liberia's bicameral legislature was chosen proportionally, giving Taylor's National Patriotic Party (NPP) a lock on both houses. The new president will need it. The task of rebuilding the country politically, economically and psy-

chologically is immense. The government is saddled with a \$2 billion foreign debt, a devastated national infrastructure, over a million displaced persons, and a society haunted by memories of fratricidal killing and rife with recriminations.

Thus far, Taylor's efforts at reconciliation have been largely symbolic. For example, he ordered official funerals for two of his immediate predecessors: William Tolbert, the last of the "Americo" presidents (the descendants of the freed North American slaves who ruled Liberia from 1847 to 1980), and Samuel Doe, the first native ruler and Tolbert's executioner.

On more substantive issues, such as cabinet appointments, the record is less encouraging. Virtually all ministries—including key ones like defense and finance—have been handed out to NPP partisans. The only significant opposition figure to gain a post is Roosevelt

Johnson, who headed the anti-Taylor United Liberation Movement faction. He was tapped to head rural development, a post one supporter called a "dead-end" job.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian-dominated West African peacekeeping force, dispatched to Liberia in 1990, remains on duty throughout the country, though it is widely expected that Taylor will send it packing as soon as he has consolidated his power.

As for the United States, Liberia is simply a problem it would like to see go away. Liberians still speak of a "special relationship" with their former patron. But Washington, which armed the anti-communist dictator Doe to the hilt during the '80s and is thus partially to blame for the war, did little to stop the fighting. Its cynical willingness to allow the Nigerian dictatorship of Sani Abacha to run the democracy-restoring operation in Liberia indicates Washington's near total lack of concern for its former "colony." ■

James Ciment is the author of several books on African conflicts and served as a monitor during this summer's election in Liberia.



A Wake-Up Call to Liberal Foundations

BY BETH SCHULMAN

IN THE COURSE OF 20 YEARS OF LEGAL GRANT MAKING, 12 moderately endowed charitable foundations have dramatically shifted the center of our public debate to the right. That's the conclusion that researcher Sally Covington reached in her July report, "Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations," given to the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

Covington says it would be difficult to overstate the impact of the John M. Olin Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and their ilk on public attitudes and public policy. Their systematic giving practices, she writes, have succeeded in "advancing the basic tenets of modern American conservatism: unregulated markets and limited governments." With carefully targeted gifts to educational, research and public interest institutions, right-wing foundations paved the way for welfare reform, which eliminated the only federal program guaranteeing a minimal level of cash assistance to the very poor.

Conservative opinion leaders and the donors who support them understand that, at the end of the day, it is not the quality of ideas that matters; the ideas that win out are those that are the best marketed. As John K. Andrews of the Heritage Foundation wrote in the late '80s, "The easy part is getting your message right. The real test is getting your message out."

Mainstream and liberal foundations like Ford and Rockefeller, with much more money to dole out, shy away from what they view as nonprofit hucksterism. Grantees who win their support, according to Covington, are not "rewarded or encouraged for their public policy activism." On the contrary, grant seekers "are often required to downplay their policy commitments in order to secure foundation support." In fact, these foundations seem intent on discouraging engagement in the policy-making process. Their grants are generally awarded only for narrowly defined projects, and grantees are asked to focus completely on producing short-term, quantifiable results.

Covington finds that liberal and mainstream foundations rarely support general operations, constituency development, multi-issue advocacy or media efforts. Their vast resources notwithstanding, they simply will not give progressive media, think tanks or public interest groups the money they need to mount the kinds of broad-spectrum public relations campaigns that conservative grantees have perfected.

The carefully orchestrated attack on the academy in recent years demonstrates the power of the right-wing philanthropic

strategy. Until the conservative foundations took an interest, the political correctness debate smoldered quietly in the back pages of academic journals. Then in late 1990, a few accounts of universities cracking down on professors accused of racism, most of them credited to Dinesh D'Souza's sloppy *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, suddenly popped up in the mainstream media. Conservative foundations encouraged and funded D'Souza's book and then poured tens of thousands of dollars into its promotion. Through such targeted spending, these foundations succeeded in clogging the media with accounts of D'Souza's few isolated incidents and associating them in the public mind with the concerns of other conservative critics like Allan Bloom about the erosion of the traditional canon.

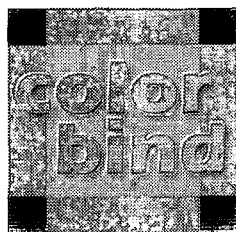
Even more successful has been these foundations' quest to reduce the size and scope of government. Led by the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, right-wing nonprofits have emerged by the dozens and grown exponentially since the late '70s. Turning message into medium, they have aggressively churned out reports, promoted "experts," held seminars and written op-ed pieces by the thousands—all pushing their view that government programs inhibit commerce and demoralize citizens.

Covington does not believe the right is invincible. Her report is not an exposé of diabolical right-wing conspiracies, but an account of sustained efforts by politically motivated conservative grant makers to build public support for their ideas and programs.

Covington's arguments should force liberal and progressive philanthropists to rethink their approach to influencing public policy. Would welfare reform, for example, have taken the form it has if liberal foundations had funded a campaign over the last two decades to make sure that the American public understood that underemployment and low wages—not the moral weaknesses of the poor—produce poverty? And imagine how, during the recent Teamsters strike, a well-funded public education campaign would have helped mainstream journalists recognize that UPS wanted to control the union's pension fund so the company, rather than the workers, could reap the benefits of a bull market.

Covington's findings suggest that the progressive strategy of speaking truth to power has, by and large, been an exercise in futility. We need a long-term commitment of resources to build a powerful communications infrastructure. Without such a commitment, the left will continue to be marginalized, rarely capturing the attention, much less the imagination, of American citizens. ■

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THE OTHER SIDE OF “Zero-Tolerance”

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

I was 9 years old when I had my first direct contact with a police officer.

A beefy white cop knocked me down and busted my lip when I protested the way he manhandled an older cousin. “Stay the fuck out of this, you little fucking nigger,” he snarled as the back of his hand slammed into my face. The vitriol that dripped from his lips was more memorable than the pain from the slap.

Like some perverse rite of combat, my encounter with that New York City cop elevated my peer status in my Harlem, N.Y. neighborhood in 1956. The wound he inflicted was transformed into a mark of distinction, and I brandished it like a medal. I told my mother I fell out of a swing in a nearby park.

In the New York City of my youth, the police were considered alien and enemy forces—an occupying army from the land of white privilege sent to humiliate, vex and sometimes kill us. And the cops avidly fulfilled our expectations. They disrespected us routinely, and gratuitously. Seldom did they miss an opportunity to humiliate us; for example, routine searches usually included a demand that we drop our pants.

Those memories flooded back as I read about Abner Louima’s horrifying tale of abuse at the hands of Brooklyn cops on August 9. After being arrested outside a Brooklyn nightclub, the 30-year-old Haitian immigrant was handcuffed, taken to Brooklyn’s 70th Precinct station

and allegedly tortured by a gang of police officers. According to Louima, the cops pulled down his pants and dragged him handcuffed to the restroom where they rammed the handle of a toilet plunger deep into his rectum, ripping his colon and bladder, and then they shoved it down his throat, shattering his teeth. While doing this, Louima said, they were spewing the same kind of racial epithets that were directed at me so many years past.

In New York,
get-tough
policing once
again turns
into cruelty.

This horrendous story of police abuse reveals that not much has changed in the years since I was a kid. But that was not news to me; my negative contacts with law enforcement continued as I got older and accelerated significantly during my teens. The same cousin I attempted to protect in 1956 was shot, point-blank, by a cop during the 1964 riots in Harlem. Wandering a bit too close to the action, we were attacked by a gaggle of angry white cops. One of them pushed me, and then another shot my cousin. Four years later, I was shot by an irate motel owner in a small Georgia town, and the

police treated me as if I had done the shooting.

The good-natured, helpful and heroic police officers showcased in the entertainment media of the day bore absolutely no resemblance to the cops I knew and hated. And although I am well past the peak ages of criminal activity and no longer fit as many “profiles” as I did in my youth, police harassment remains an occasional feature of my life. There is the routine humiliation of being

stopped and frisked while visiting white friends in certain neighborhoods. My black male friends and I find gallows humor in receiving traffic tickets for "driving-while-black." Even now, I'm a party in a class-action lawsuit against Illinois State Police for harassment of African-American motorists.

African-Americans remain as concerned as always about police harassment and brutality. Mainstream America, however, has yet to take those concerns seriously, except when glaring examples like the televised mauling of Rodney King make them impossible to ignore. Although racist policing is a venerable tradition in U.S. society (the first organized police force in this country was the slave patrols), official denial that criminal justice is anything but "color-blind" is just as deeply rooted.

Most whites continue to believe that police violence against blacks is only an occasional, isolated problem. "The violence generated by white racism is one of the obvious realities of American society," wrote historian Herbert Shapiro in his 1988 book *White Violence and Black Response*. "Yet it is one of the ironies of contemporary experience that many Americans have been conditioned to associate violence with the behavior of black people."

Shapiro's study also shows how the main avenues of redress have traditionally been closed to blacks. "The courts have most often stood silent in the face of racist violence or have turned their wrath against the victims, not the perpetrators; the police have protected the mob rather than the mobbed and have often either aided the lynchers or displayed amazing inability to identify them," he wrote. "Blacks have understood that for them there was no reasonable assurance that the law-abiding citizen could expect to be treated with civility by the police."

Anger and frustration about repeated police abuse have provoked several outbreaks of urban unrest over the last half-century, according to the findings of several "blue-ribbon" commissions. Police brutality was the precipitating factor in the racial disorders of Harlem in 1935 and 1943, the so-called "long hot summer" riots of the '60s, the Miami riots of the '80s, the "Rodney King" riot that inflamed South Central Los Angeles in 1992 and last year's explosion in St. Petersburg, Florida. But none of these incidents led to the sort of far-reaching reforms of police strategy that could have prevented them in the first place.

In New York City, the Mollen Commission, which was appointed in 1993 by Mayor David Dinkins to investigate police corruption, reported a pattern of excessive force and

**Louima
charged that
the cops who
assaulted him
chanted, "it's
Giuliani time
now."**

charged that police commanders tolerated it. In its 1995 report, the commission recommended that the city create a permanent external watchdog body with the power to oversee the police department's own Internal Affairs Division and to launch its own independent investigations. But Dinkins' successor, Rudolph Giuliani, and then police commissioner William Bratton rejected the commission's recommendations.

In 1996, Amnesty International issued a 72-page report also citing a pattern of abuse by the New York Police Department which targeted primarily blacks and Latinos. Based on an 18-month investigation (see "Getting away with murder," January 6), the report found that charges of police brutality in New York climbed from 977 in 1987 to more than 2,000 in 1994. Howard Safir, the police commissioner who replaced Bratton, described Amnesty's report as "short on facts and long on hype." Giuliani's

response was similarly dismissive.

The mayor has consistently defended the questionable actions of the city's cops. He dismissed community concerns about excessive force after three police officers fired 24 bullets into an unarmed young black man named Aswon Watson last year in Brooklyn. When police shot a 16-year-old Dominican youth named Kevin Cedeno in the back earlier this year, Giuliani quickly offered the officers his official support. He charged that the Washington Heights residents protesting the shooting were being exploited by political opportunists like the Rev. Al Sharpton, a candidate for mayor.

Giuliani's enthusiastic support for a zero-tolerance crack-down on so-called "quality of life" offenses also contributed to the New York Police Department's lack of concern for the civil rights of people suspected—but not convicted—of crimes. City officials and police credit this new strategy, which is all the rage in police circles these days, with significantly reducing serious crime in the city. Analysts trace this policing strategy to a 1982 *Atlantic Monthly* article by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, entitled "Broken Windows." The authors argued that neighborhoods with broken windows, graffiti, litter and other indications of "disorder" were crucibles for crime. If the laws against these symbols of disorder were enforced aggressively, they claimed, it would restore a sense of public safety and criminals would be less likely to make their move. Not surprisingly, this zero-tolerance approach is practiced most conscientiously in poor, minority neighborhoods where "broken windows" predominate, serving, in essence, to give cops even more leeway in abusing the rights of community residents. Louima charged that the cops who assaulted him chanted "it's Giuliani time

now, not Dinkins time."

But once the media got wind of the Louima story, the mayor responded quickly and forcefully. Justin Volpe, the 25-year-old officer charged with wielding the plunger handle, has been charged with assault, sexual assault and aggravated sexual abuse; 31-year-old Charles Schawrz was charged with assault; and 12 other officers from the 70th Precinct were either transferred, suspended or demoted to desk duty. In response, Giuliani also created the Police/Community Relations Task Force, a 28-member panel that will examine the increasingly strained relationship between cops and community and conduct numerous forums on the issue.

All of this is occurring in an election year, in which the incumbent Giuliani seemed to be coasting toward a second term. The Louima incident is unlikely to dissuade those New Yorkers already in the Giuliani camp, but the furor hit the mayor where he's most vulnerable: If enough of New York's minority population is angered by Giuliani's cavalier attitude toward police violence, his campaign could suddenly find itself in trouble. Those considerations undoubtedly factored into his forthright response to the Louima outrage. However, Giuliani is not likely to change the department's aggressive policing style.

That approach contrasts with the much more sensible notion of "community policing," which attempts to encourage more neighborhood involvement in crime-dampening efforts. In this model, police meet regularly with residents and coordinate plans with community leaders. In fact, strategies that recast police as community-builders as well as crime fighters were gaining some national headway, until New York's surprising drop in crime (some have called it the "New York miracle") enhanced the attraction of Giuliani's get-tough approach.

In truth, however, crime was on the decline in cities across the country even before the so-called miracle. And while city officials are quick to credit the decrease in crime to better policing, experts are not so sure. "The criminal justice system is only one of a number of factors that influence crime rates," explains Marc Mauer, assistant director of the Sentencing Project, a Washington-based research and criminal justice reform group. "Other significant variables include demographic changes, violence associated with the drug trade, the availability of firearms and community mobilization," he says.

Maybe the horrific abuse of Louima will reduce the allure of Giuliani's approach, but probably not. And even if police departments reject the "broken windows" theory, the racist practices of U.S. policing will likely endure until the targeted communities decide they're no longer willing to tolerate those practices.

Even though I was a frequent victim of abuse, I've managed to maintain some measure of empathy for the police and the enormous social fissures they are required to patch. But I also understand the rage felt by blacks and other minorities as they suffer routine humiliation and abuse from police and have no effective means of redress.

Sadly, the gap between the police and the black community has narrowed only slightly since that 9-year-old was knocked off his feet on a Harlem street long ago. ■



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A NEW LEFT *for a new century*

THE SPANISH LEFT SEEKS A MORE PERFECT UNION

MADRID

In the past two years, voters have elected left governments in Italy, France and England. In each case, victory was made possible because the different left parties and left factions within parties downplayed their differences and made common cause against the right. In Spain, meanwhile, the left is at war with itself, as those who want to follow the example of Britain or France are meeting strong resistance from Spanish Communist Party leaders who refuse to taint their true beliefs with the give and take of coalition politics. At stake is not only the return of a left government in Spain, but the chance for the left to control power in the European Union, which is increasingly becoming a united states of Europe.

In 1982, Spain's Socialist Party swept into power with 48 percent of the vote, while the other party on the left, the Communist Party, garnered 4 percent. In 1986, with their public support still at 4 percent and the Socialists re-elected to office, the Communists, under the leadership of Julio Anguita, shifted gears. Anguita forged a new political alliance called the United Left, a coalition of the Communist Party, greens, feminists and pacifists. Though numerically dominated by the Communists, and led by Anguita, this group functioned as a real coalition, operating by consensus and allowing differences of opinion to flourish. By 1989, the United Left was a political force, with the support of nearly 10 percent of voters.

But in the early '90s, as the Socialists were beset by scandals and heading for a fall, Anguita began to take the United Left down a sectarian path. His detractors now call him the "last Leninist." At its 1995 biennial conference, the Communist Party passed a resolution stating that it would exercise hegemony within the United Left, thereby officially abandoning the coalition strategy. Using that power, the Communist Party pursued a political course that Anguita, using a river metaphor, termed the "two banks." On one bank were the United Left and its regional affiliates, and on the other, the Socialist Party, the Popular Party (the conservative party now

in power throughout Spain) and the conservative nationalist parties from the autonomous regions. And never the two should meet. Under this scheme, the United Left presented itself as the only true left, making cooperation with the Socialists out of the question.

In the March 1996 national elections, the Socialists, supported by only 38 percent of the electorate, were thrown out of office, and the Popular Party, with 39 percent, took power. Failing to attract voters who were disenchanted with the Socialists, the United Left remained on the sidelines with 11 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, Anguita began to face opposition from within the United Left, as a group of dissidents calling themselves the New Left began to challenge his leadership. The New Left, which was officially established as a

political party in November 1996 but still operates within the United Left coalition, is led by Cristina Almeida, a feminist lawyer and member of the Congress of Deputies, and Diego López Garrido, a professor of constitutional law at the University of Castilla LaMancha.

Almeida, the New Left's president, and López Garrido, the party's general secretary, want the United Left to cooperate with the Socialists to ensure that the Spanish left, which enjoys the support of a plurality of the

voters, translates its natural majority into a governing one. They would like the left in Spain to emulate the coalition strategy that leftist parties have successfully deployed in Italy, France and the United Kingdom. (Currently in Germany, the Greens and the Social Democrats are forging a similar electoral alliance.)

"We are in the age of several varieties of left. There is not one unique left," says López Garrido at his home in the Rosa Luxemburg subdivision of a Madrid suburb. "Neoliberalism pretends to build one system of thought in the world, and we are against this trend. But we also think there is no one way of thinking inside the left. We are at the beginning of a new age of pluralism."



But left pluralism is a difficult concept to accept for those steeped in the culture of the old left. In May, the three members of the New Left who belong to the 21-member United Left delegation in the Congress of Deputies walked out rather than follow the United Left line and vote against a measure that legalized a labor relations pact that had been negotiated between the Spanish trade unions and the Spanish business community. Anguita responded by stripping the three New Left deputies of their seats on congressional commissions and expelling all the New Left leaders from the United Left executive committee. Since then, López Garrido and other New Left leaders have appeared in the media on a daily basis, publicly challenging the direction Anguita is taking the coalition. In August, the confrontation escalated into what *El País*, Spain's leading daily, characterized in a front-page headline as "open war."

At the same time that López Garrido has been battling Anguita, he has been making overtures to Joaquín Almunia, who earlier this year replaced former Spanish president Felipe González as Socialist Party general secretary. In a change of direction for the Socialists, who had previously shunned the United Left, Almunia has proposed that the left make common cause against the Popular Party. The only hope the left has for regaining power at the national, regional and local levels is for the Socialist Party and the political forces to its left to forge a coalition. And while the New Left is still a minor player in Spanish politics, they could potentially swing a close election.

Still, there are plenty of differences between the New Left and the Socialist Party. The New Left is not tainted by the recent history of political scandals and corruption that has plagued the Socialists. And the Socialists are more conservative in terms of their monetary and economic policies, preferring market liberalism to democratic socialism. Further, unlike the Socialist Party, the New Left believes that NATO is a Cold War relic that should be abandoned in favor of a European defense, which would maintain close ties with the United States but be independent.

The New Left and the Socialists both support the move to a single European currency, an initiative that the Communists who control the United Left absolutely oppose. "Monetary union will be good for Spain," says López Garrido. "The Euro will be an expression of European sovereignty against the U.S. dollar and the Japanese yen." In fact, the New Left favors more substantial political integration of Europe than the Socialists, arguing that Europe has thus far been too timid about building the European Union into a truly democratic political entity.

López Garrido believes that the political debates of the 21st century will center around the distribution of the world's wealth, not the control of production, since that question has already been resolved. And he says the world needs to restructure its economic institutions on the same scale as the Bretton Woods conference, which in 1944 established the current international monetary system. Important reforms would include a tax on financial transactions and the abolition of "fiscal paradises" such as the Cayman Islands that permit the rich to launder their money and avoid taxes.

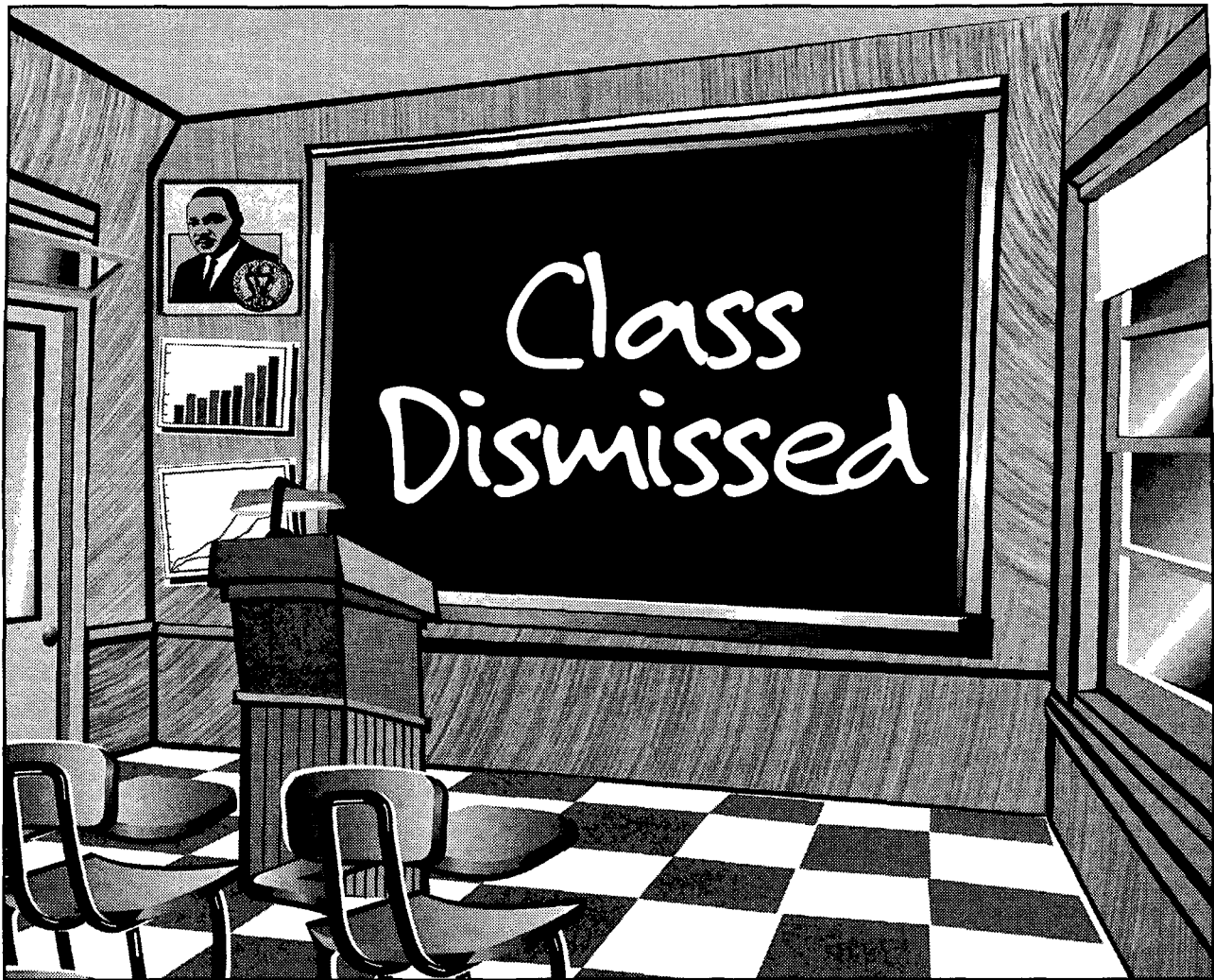
But before such measures can be implemented, international political institutions must be expanded, empowered and democratized. "The great contradiction of our age is that there is no equilibrium between the power of international finance and the power of individual states," says López Garrido. "We need to have a new economic system to equalize this power. And that is an issue for the left." The left in Europe can, through its influence in the European Union, play a vital role in these new "supranational" political endeavors.

Sharing a common currency and led by center-left governments, a united states of Europe could be a vital source of progressive political power and a first step toward holding multinational corporations accountable. But any progress in this direction requires that the left and center-left come together and win elections in the European Union's member nations. If the Socialists and the New Left have their way in the next national elections, in the year 2000, the Spanish left will greet the new century by ending the right's reign in Spain. ■

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Welfare recipients fight to stay in college

BY FELICIA KORNBLUH

“Fight, fight, welfare is a right!” chanted the tattered coalition of union members, nonprofit social-agency staff, legal immigrants and—for the first time—college students on welfare.

The protesters were gathered beneath New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver’s office windows in Lower Manhattan. It was April, early on in the battle over how New York state would make its welfare laws comply with the national welfare “reform” legislation. The student protesters, all undergraduates at the City University of New York (CUNY), were members of the CUNY Welfare Rights Initiative, a remarkable experiment in low-income organizing that has helped shift the balance of power in New York’s welfare debate.

“I have yet to find a politician who will say that education is not a helpful thing in terms of getting people off welfare.”

The CUNY project is part of a wave of low-income student organizing that has emerged on and off campuses across the country since 1995. These students on public assistance—who are articulate, uncompromising and intimately familiar with the arcana of welfare law—have stiffened the backbone and strengthened the rhetoric of pro-welfare forces nationwide.

The student activists want to finish their educations without adding the burden of workfare to lives already weighed down with obligations to school and children. They demonstrate, lobby, teach and advocate for themselves and other women and men who want the chance to go to college. They go to school for three main reasons: to gain financial independence; to better provide for their families; and to develop at least a fraction of their human potential in school and later in jobs that require intellectual effort.

For the typical welfare recipient—a woman in her 20s or early 30s with young children and a history of domestic violence, crummy education and low expectations for achievement—the opportunity to attend a community or four-year college can be a godsend. “By the middle of the first semester, we felt human again,” remembers Therese Scofield, who attended Suffolk (N.Y.) Community College and organized welfare recipients there. “Instead of being beaten down—‘we’re bad mothers, we’re bad citizens’—here was the place where you succeeded on your own efforts.”

Despite the appeal of their claims, these college students face the same unforgiving time limits and work requirements as other public assistance recipients. “I have yet to find a politician who will say that education is not a helpful thing in terms of people getting off welfare,” says Maureen Lane of the CUNY Welfare Rights Initiative. “What the arguments tend to be about is, ‘well, they should work too.’ ” However, many find combining school and work to be an insurmountable hurdle. Punished financially if they fail to show up for workfare and discouraged from studying, these students give up.

For conservatives and liberals alike, higher education for welfare recipients would seem to be a natural. Welfare recipients find tuition money on their own by combining Pell grants, college financial aid and loans. The welfare department pays only for transportation and childcare—which it would need to finance even if all the students dropped out and did workfare full-time. Furthermore, education is instrumental in helping welfare recipients do all the things politicians say they should do: finding and keeping jobs, leaving the welfare rolls permanently, and developing the “human capital” that is supposedly so central to U.S. economic competitiveness. And yet politicians seem to be obsessed with putting everyone to work immediately.

The best-known features of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, which has taken effect in stages this year, are the five-year time limit and the elimination of the entitlement to benefits. For students, equally important is the requirement that an increasing percentage of recipients perform “work activities” after two years on welfare. “Work activities” include vocational education and job search or readiness programs. However, the law specifies a one-year time limit for the former and a six-week limit for the

latter. What is more, as a result of a clarifying amendment passed in August, only 20 percent of those in work activities are allowed to enroll in vocational education. Most of the rest will have workfare assignments as low-level clerical aides, underpaid hospital workers or members of urban clean-up crews.

Under the new law, federal administrators retain little power to supervise state welfare departments. But they can punish states financially if they miss targets for placing recipients in “work.” This is bad news for students hoping to delay workfare until they finish school. The targets do not sound overly onerous. States must get a quarter of public aid recipients into “work activities” in the current fiscal year and half in 2002 and thereafter. However, according to welfare recipients, poverty lawyers and other advocates, the fear of losing welfare funds has driven many states and counties to a “workfare-until-proven-innocent” policy of automatically assigning clients to workfare jobs.

Overall, says Scofield, who now works full-time organizing the Suffolk Welfare Warriors, the recent changes deny welfare recipients the chance at an education. “We are not back to school,” she says. “The immediate prognosis is horrendous. I think it’s going to be an incredible fight to win that right [to education] back.”

Students at community colleges will take the hardest hit from welfare changes. The American Association of Community Colleges estimates that of a total 10.2 million community college students, 5 percent to 10 percent will drop out because of welfare reform. In Massachusetts, advocates Sue Jhirad and Erica Cates note an average drop of 38 percent in the enrollment of welfare recipients in community colleges throughout the state between 1994 and 1996. According to Melinda Lackey, director of the CUNY Welfare Rights Initiative, of 28,000 welfare recipients enrolled in New York’s community and four-year schools in 1995, 8,000 have already dropped out as a result of tuition hikes and workfare.

This grim situation has spawned extraordinary activism among welfare recipients enrolled in higher education. These activists use a range of tactics to mobilize other welfare recipients and to improve their own situation, from helping individual women figure out how to stay in school to broad-based efforts at legislative change. This school year, college students on welfare will be more politically active than ever before.

The most common tactic that the groups use is one-on-one advocacy for welfare recipients with their caseworkers. In Massachusetts, for example, a campus organizing project sponsored by the welfare recipients’ newspaper *Survival News* pays the stipends of six campus organizers. These organizers help students with caseworkers who assume they are ineligible for college even though, under state law, they clearly are not. “I go in with the students to see their social worker and say, ‘I am their legal advocate and this is the law,’ ” says Middlesex Community College organizer Lisa Sanderson.

Similarly, participants in the CUNY Welfare Rights Initiative come to the aid of other participants in battles with caseworkers over workfare, schooling and childcare. More experienced members also train newer members in how to be

effective welfare advocates. Former John Jay College organizer Bianca Vela describes the advocates' role as countering the "strategy of intimidation" of the welfare department. "Sometimes our students are told outright 'you can't go to college,'" Vela says.

Student welfare recipients also provide services directly to one another without going through welfare departments. LIFE-Time (Low-Income Families Empowerment Through Education), a Bay Area nonprofit devoted to issues of welfare and higher education, offers the most advanced example of this collective self-help. LIFE-Time has organized students and educated administrators at the University of California-Berkeley, on the four campuses in the Peralta (Alameda County) college system and at the City College of San Francisco. The group seeks to substitute the expertise of low-income people for that of professionals. "One of our mottoes," says Diana Spatz, LIFE-Time's sole paid staffer, "is 'poor does not equal stupid.'"

LIFE-Time has negotiated a deal at the City College of San Francisco to turn the second floor of the student government offices into the Betty Shabazz Family Center, a facility created for students on welfare and staffed by them. Students will provide childcare for one another while they are in class and will hold organizing meetings and trainings in the space. Last spring, LIFE-Time offered its first regional conference on educational access for low-income people. Those who attended included welfare recipients both in school and out, college administrators and a range of advocates. Welfare recipients chaired and moderated each panel.

Student organizers also have become increasingly active in policy-making at the state level. The *Survival News* organizers participate in a statewide Welfare Education and Training Access Coalition (WETAC) in Massachusetts. WETAC, with over 250 members, is lobbying for legislation to allow the time students spend in school to count toward their work requirements. The legislation failed last year, thanks to a veto by Gov. William Weld, but may succeed this year. WETAC will also join with a wider body of labor and low-income activists to push for the repeal of the two-year welfare time limit that exists in Massachusetts.

Working for Economic Equality and Liberation (WEEL), a statewide group in Montana, focuses on direct action and public education. WEEL, which has 500 members and a 10-person board composed entirely of women currently or previously on welfare, has no statewide education agenda because welfare policy varies from county to county in Montana. In Missoula, which allows some recipients to attend college, WEEL is seeking more childcare funding to help those in school. In March, WEEL built a cardboard shantytown at the state Capitol to protest the Montana legislature's threat to refuse federal block grant money for welfare. And on August 22, the group mounted a major demonstration to mark the one-year anniversary of President Clinton's signing of the welfare reform law.

**This school year,
college students
on welfare will be
more politically
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before.**

Welfare activists on campuses have also designed courses that serve as vehicles of public education and organizing. At the heart of the CUNY Welfare Rights Initiative, for example, are two for-credit courses open to any CUNY student who has received public assistance. The first covers the history and fine points of welfare policy. The second, an internship, teaches how to organize other students, draft petitions and develop position papers. These courses allow welfare recipients to meet one another and talk about issues of scholarly and immediate personal significance. The leading activists in the CUNY Wel-

fare Rights Initiative, including Vela and Lane, started out as students in these courses.

With help from Professor Tim Sampson at San Francisco State University, Spatz has organized a course for this fall semester that will support organizing on that campus. She has previously coordinated two "service learning" courses at UC-Berkeley, which helped low-income students locate resources and oriented them to college.

Organizing is now expanding from campuses into surrounding communities. In California, LIFE-Time has begun a campaign to inform audiences of welfare recipients and other poor people who would like to attend college but believe they are not allowed. For Scofield in New York's Suffolk County, the move from campus to community represents an effort to follow her constituents as they put schooling aside in order to comply with workfare requirements.

It remains to be seen how widespread activism around welfare and higher education will become. But it has already made a difference in relatively well-organized areas such as New York City. This coming academic year, unlike last year, welfare offices will subtract the amount of time that students spend in college classes from the number of hours of workfare they must do. Twenty hours of college work/study or a 30-hour internship will exempt a student with a child under six from workfare. For those who do receive workfare assignments, a state law passed in August allows students to work on their campuses instead of in far-away city parks or office buildings.

As the new school semester begins, welfare-rights advocates are focusing on immediate goals. "We want to make sure that there isn't a student on welfare who has to leave college in 1997-1998," pledges Lane. To explain her commitment to this uphill battle, she says that education is "about human potential. It's about the society's commitment to either foster it or squelch it. We're into fostering."

Felicia Kornbluh is a steering committee member of the *Women's Committee of 100*, a pro-welfare feminist group. She is also a Samuel Golieb fellow in legal history at New York University Law School, where she is writing a book about the welfare rights movement of the '60s and early '70s.

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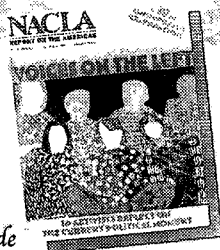
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on the eve of peace talks

By JIM DEE

An Exclusive
Interview
with Sinn Fein
Leader
Gerry Adams

Provided that the Irish Republican Army's cease-fire holds, Sinn Fein—the political party aligned with the IRA—will enter Northern Ireland peace talks for the first time on September 15. If they get off the ground, the talks, which are slated to wrap up by next May, will mark a significant step forward in the peace process.

The IRA's new cease-fire, called on July 20, paved the way for Sinn Fein's participation. The IRA's previous cease-fire began in August 1994 and lasted for 17 months. Accusing the British government of reneging on private commitments to start all-party talks within three months of the cessation of fighting, the IRA set off a bomb in February 1996 at the Docklands business complex in London.

Devastating bombings last year in London, Manchester and the British Army's headquarters in Northern Ireland at Lisburn—coupled with the high-profile assassination of two policemen in Lurgan this June—demonstrated that the IRA's lethal power was very much intact.

The Labor Party victory in the British general election of May 1 helped break the impasse. Tony Blair's massive majority in parliament has freed him from the pressures on his Conservative predecessor John Major, whose razor-thin majority made placating Northern Ireland's unionists a matter of survival for his government.

May also marked the beginning of a string of electoral triumphs for Sinn Fein. Gerry Adams regained his west Belfast Westminster seat (which he lost in 1992, and now holds in absentia), while his party grabbed a second seat in the British parliament. Sinn Fein then

garnered an unprecedented 16 percent of the vote in local elections on May 21, and elected its first-ever member to the Irish Republic's parliament in June.

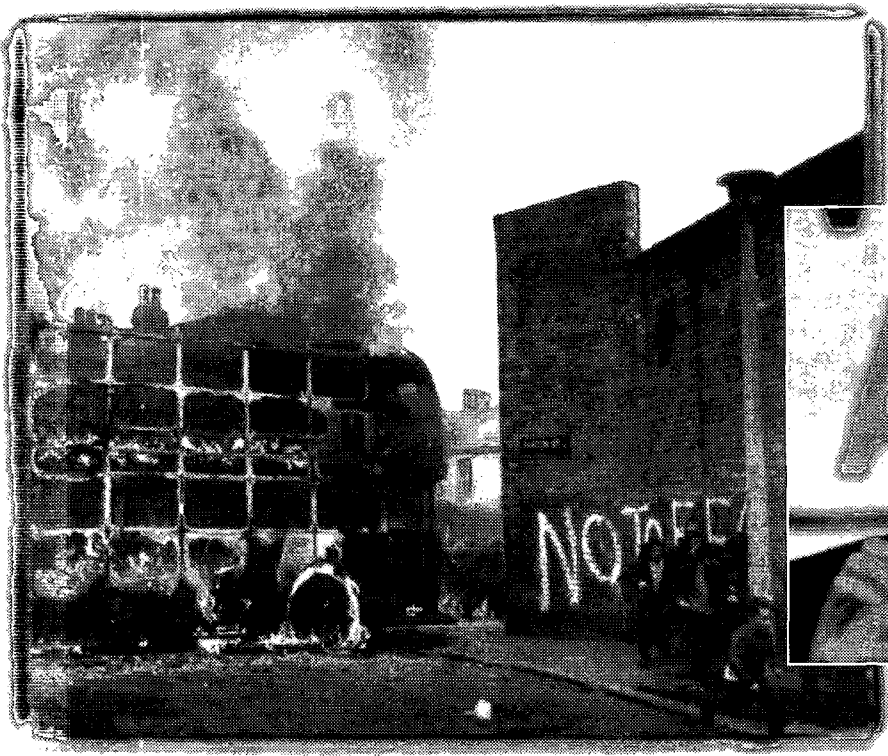
After winning assurances from Britain and Ireland that it would not be required to surrender its weapons as a prerequisite for Sinn Fein's admittance to talks, the IRA called a new cease-fire in July. (The issue of disarmament will be addressed by a subcommittee, separate from the main talks.)

Adams was interviewed at the Felons' Club in west Belfast on August 8 by Jim Dee, a freelance journalist who has covered Ireland for a variety of newspapers and magazines in the United States and Canada.

ITT: What do you expect from the talks?

Gerry Adams: We have to see negotiations as an area of struggle. In our first meeting with the British government on August 6, we were able to put on the agenda the issues that we believe are central to a democratic peace settlement. Those issues concern the union—we want it ended. We want an Ireland that is free and independent of Britain. Within that broad agenda, there needs to be maximum discussion and a willingness to make changes concerning the constitutional, institutional and political issues that relate to the relationship between Ireland and Britain.

We also want to see an equality agenda initiated, advanced and built upon. Catholics are still over two times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants. The Irish language still has no legal status. National



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"I want to see all the guns taken out of Irish politics—but not as a prerequisite for progress or for negotiations."

rights are not respected. The equality agenda shouldn't even be a matter for negotiations. The British government has signed up, but has done nothing to match their rhetoric with deeds on this issue.

And then, of course, the situation needs to be totally demilitarized. You can hear a helicopter in the background. That helicopter hasn't left the skies here since the IRA cease-fire of July 20. The British continue to patrol in nationalist areas at the same high level. Prisoners need to be released. And the whole apparatus of militarism, which has been forced upon people here, needs to be dismantled.

ITT: *Throughout the peace process, both the British and Irish governments have stood by their traditional stance that Irish reunification can only occur with the consent of a majority within the North itself. Demographic projections indicate a likely Catholic majority early in the next century. That means reunification may be 20 or 30 years away. Is that acceptable to you?*

Adams: It depends on your definition of consent. Sinn Fein has always argued for consent, or ascent, and we think it needs to be worked at. All of us need to negotiate the consent. But consent as the British define it—and I think implicitly as you define it in your question—involves unionists only. No one has ever asked my consent. No one has ever asked the consent of nationalists. We need a two-way street here.

Sinn Fein comes to this issue in a very generous and positive way. This island is our shared inheritance; it's our shared home. We need to seek each other's consent about developing a society that reflects the diversity of the people of this island. If consent is seen as a euphemism for a veto,

rather than going forward into the future, we end up slipping back into the past. And that should be, and must be, avoided at all costs.

ITT: *David Trimble and John Taylor of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) have hinted that September 15 may be too early to start talks. They want more time to consult their party's membership, and want the British government first to clarify its stance on decommissioning weapons. Two of the other main unionist parties—Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Robert McCartney's United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP)—have officially withdrawn from talks in protest against Sinn Fein's inclusion. Do you still think progress can be made in talks at this point?*

Adams: Our position is that the unionist parties should be at the talks on September 15. We want to see them there. They have a mandate to be there. If they don't turn up, then I think that their positions need to be kept open for them. Their seats need to be reserved, and the door needs to be kept very, very, very much open to allow them to come in at some other point. In the meantime, progress has to be made. The two governments are committed to substantive talks on the core issues, and these talks should proceed.

ITT: *Assuming that it attends talks at the outset, if Trimble's UUP—the largest party in Northern Ireland—later joins the*

DUP and UKUP in walking out of talks, the talks will effectively end. If talks fail, the British and Irish governments have said they may impose a settlement based on their co-authored Framework Document of February 1995. The Framework Document proposes a new 90-member elected assembly in the North, and a North-South assembly comprised of elected representatives from, and accountable to, the new Northern Ireland assembly and the Irish parliament. The North-South body would aim to facilitate cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland. Is such a settlement acceptable to you?

Adams: Both governments see the Framework Document as the parameters, if you like, or the broad guidelines. That's their suggested way of moving forward. But they have also said that there is no premeditated outcome and that every single issue should be on the agenda.

Therefore, we would like to take the opportunity to maximize the potential within the Framework Document, and at the same time to offer our own proposals of what needs to be moved forward. I hope our proposals will be seen as something that other people can take a position on. Some of the other parties may offer their proposals. It's out of that exchange of views that we will get some sort of agreement. We're going into negotiations to listen to what the governments have to say, to listen to what the other parties have to say, but also to put out our own position.

ITT: *The Ulster Unionists continue to demand that the IRA decommission its weapons over the course of the talks, in order to convince unionists that Irish republicans are serious about peace. Do you consider their concerns legitimate?*

Adams: Let's hear their concerns from them directly—person to person. I think most people would be thankful if the guns are silenced. There are more licensed weapons in the hands of unionists than anyone else. I don't demand that these weapons be decommissioned as some sort of precondition for negotiations, or that they be dismantled during negotiations. All of the main establishment forces—whether the paramilitary police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, or the Royal Irish Regiment, the British regiment that is recruited here, or the British forces—are representative of the unionists.

So the licensed weapons—and the state weapons, which are the biggest bulk of the licensed weapons—are in the hands of unionists. I want to see them decommissioned. I want to see all of the guns taken out of Irish politics—but not as a prerequisite for progress or for negotiations. So let's proceed mindful of all the fears, but also open to each other. And let's see what progress is possible.

ITT: *Driving around Belfast, it's impossible not to notice the huge new British military base built on the Springfield Road. Some of the other bases in outlying areas have also been recently refurbished. How can this sort of militarization be addressed in the peace process?*

Adams: These military structures all have to be decommis-

sioned. I make that point not to be provocative, but to state the reality. You have to take a comprehensive view of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British forces. People sometimes blame them for what they do. They do what they're paid and trained to do. Individual officers bear some individual responsibility, of course. But generally speaking, the responsibility lies with the British. The British have treated this as a security situation. So it's understandable that they have put in these big bases.

The challenge facing Tony Blair is to start to deal with it as a political problem. Then you're not dealing with terrorists, insurgents, gangsters and all the other demonizing labels. You're dealing with people whose rights are being denied and whose views are rarely taken on board. Looked at in that light, those bases need to be dismantled. The money going into these bases should be spent on children's education, hospital services, and helping the elderly and the poor.

ITT: *What's your assessment of the Blair administration to date?*

Adams: Well, it's a new government in London. We want it to be the last government with responsibility in Ireland. We believe that we don't need English ministers or anyone else to govern us. We can surely govern ourselves in the future. Will Tony Blair be the British prime minister who makes history and helps bring that about? We'll see.

ITT: *Are you optimistic that you'll see reunification in your lifetime?*

Adams: Yes. I think Mr. Blair got it entirely wrong when he told an audience in Belfast in May that we would not see Irish unity in the lifetime of what he called the youngest person in the audience—and the camera at that time panned out to some young children. He has no special wisdom. He has no powers of prophesy. We're going to ensure—and I hope he will become part of it—that not only will we see Irish unity, but we will see a new relationship between the people of his island and the people of our island. ■

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BY G. PASCAL ZACHARY

GLOBAL BACKLASH



*From the jungles of Malaysia
to the cities of Europe,
people are questioning
economic integration.*

MARUDI, MALAYSIA

In the steamy jungles surrounding the small river town of Marudi, Malaysia, native peoples have been protesting the expansion of palm-oil plantations, blocking logging roads and seizing clearing equipment. The government, which has arrested scores of native protesters in recent months, says the palm-oil industry provides much-needed foreign exchange for this export-dependent Southeast Asian nation.

"We simply want to preserve our traditional way of life," says Jok Jau Evong, a leader of the Kayan tribe, who opposes converting native forests into plantations. "This is our land. If we allow the government to take it, we will lose everything. So we cannot give up, no matter how difficult it is."

All around the world, even as capitalism penetrates the farthest reaches of the globe, ordinary people are finding a fresh

resolve to question—and perhaps even slow or halt—the integration of local and national economies. Today their resistance is chiefly local, because they lack the resources and political clout to mount global campaigns and because—despite talk of how globalization is undermining national sovereignty—local governments remain the most logical opposing forces to transnational corporations.

How far the backlash against global economic integration will go isn't clear, but there are plenty of signs that an extraordinary period of expanding trade agreements—a period that gave birth to the World Trade Organization, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Union and important regional trading pacts—is coming to a close. "All over the world, the air is being let out of the balloon of

great optimism about trade agreements," says Jeffrey Garten, dean of the Yale School of Management and a trade official in the first Clinton administration. "In the late '90s, we will see a radical slowing down in enthusiasm for free trade."

The slowdown is already under way in the United States. President Clinton, fearful of a rebuff, has repeatedly put off introducing legislation for fast track authority, which makes negotiating new trade deals much easier. In the coming weeks, as Clinton finally starts to campaign publicly for such authority, he can expect attacks from all sides. Meanwhile, expansion of NAFTA, once seen as a sure thing, has been put on indefinite hold as opponents assail claims that the pact produced a net growth in American jobs. Critics of export-powerhouse China, though failing earlier this year to take away the country's trading privileges with the United States, are vowing to pursue more targeted sanctions later this year. These critics have already seized upon China's religious persecution of Tibetan Buddhists as grounds to curtail commercial relations.

The United States is not the only country where proponents of multinational capital are on the defensive.

Argentina was rocked in August by a general strike, which followed months of vigorous labor protests. Workers are angry that President Carlos Menem's imposition of neoliberal reforms—including the gutting of the country's tariff barriers—has caused unemployment to skyrocket to 17 percent.

In India, voters ejected a reformist government earlier this year that had sharply reduced trade barriers but exacerbated a widening gap between rich and poor, partly by cutting public subsidies.

In France, the newly elected Socialist Party is willing to give trade a lower priority and shorten the work week in order to protect the standard of living of the working class from low-wage foreign competition.

But probably the most arresting example of the globalization backlash is Mexico, where opposition parties critical of the government's economic policies won control of one legislative branch as well as the mayoralty of Mexico City in elections this summer. Ordinary Mexicans are fed up with the decline in real wages that has occurred since NAFTA was approved four years ago. But even Mexico's elite is questioning whether the country has opened its economy too much to foreign influences. While investors in the booming export industries along the border are happy with regional integration, NAFTA has far fewer supporters among sectors of the Mexican business class, based largely in Mexico City, that sell to the domestic market and have traditionally relied on tariffs to protect them from foreign competitors.

"The big question is where will this backlash lead?" says Garten. "To an unwinding of a lot of global integration, or to just a pause in globalization, a period of digestion?"

Clearly the global elite is worried. The current issue of *For-*

THE CONCEPT OF COMMON GLOBAL STANDARDS IS GAINING POPULARITY.

eign Affairs, the journal of the ultra-establishment Council on Foreign Relations, is almost wholly devoted to threats to an ascendant capitalism. In the opening article, historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. holds out the specter of backlash, declaring that economic "integration and disintegration feed on each other." Already seeing the pendulum swinging, Schlesinger predicts the waning of "laissez-faire ideology ... as capitalists discover the range of troubles the unfettered market cannot solve, or makes worse."

No one thinks the enormous gains by capital in the '90s can be overturned overnight, or that the abuses of global-

ization can be decisively reformed. The scattered nature of the backlash also limits its force. Critics of global integration are a motley group. Some are intense nationalists fearful of modernization. Some want to protect specific industries. Others are disturbed by the uneven distribution of wealth spawned by globalization. "There are a lot of inchoate feelings about what's going on," says Peter Murrell, a University of Maryland economist. "But the critics don't offer any coherent alternative."

In the United States, for instance, critics of free trade run the gamut from environmentalists and human rights advocates on the left to followers of Pat Buchanan and religious fundamentalists on the right. "This is an odd group in political terms, but it's large," says Pat Choate, a conservative trade critic.

Debate will increasingly revolve around how to level the playing field among industrialized and developing countries in the areas of labor rights, civil law and environmental standards. "As countries become more integrated through trade, investment and migration, the awareness of the inter-relatedness of national economies will grow," says Laura Tyson, a professor of business at the University of California-Berkeley and a former economic adviser to Clinton.

For some critics of globalization, this means that the United States should broaden trade only with countries that share basic standards on labor, capital and natural resources. "It's crucial to achieve compatibility between countries in the areas of human rights, labor and the environment," says Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), the House minority leader. "We're not going to get there quickly, but that's the goal."

The concept of common global standards is gaining popularity in the United States and Europe. The assumption is that the market, left to itself, won't raise standards quickly enough in developing countries. Indeed, there's growing evidence that wages for some workers in developing countries actually fall in response to widening trade. The U.N. Conference on Trade and Development reported in August that not only is income inequality growing in countries that have rapidly opened up to global capital, but that unskilled workers—especially in Latin America—have seen wage declines of as much as 30 percent.

The answer isn't to immediately mandate a worldwide minimum wage or a common global environmental standard, but

to gradually push developing countries to raise their standards while at the same time providing a cushion for workers in industrialized countries who are harmed by low-wage competition. In either case, as Ellen Meiksins Wood notes in the current issue of *Monthly Review*, state and local governments still possess "the most powerful weapons for blocking globalization."

Industrialized countries must preserve their system of social protections. "You can't gut what little safety net we have without undermining the political sustainability of the international economic approach," says C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics in Washington. In other words, at the very least, governments ignore losers from globalization at their own peril.

Economists have long been cynical about aiding workers harmed by foreign competition, arguing that low-skilled jobs should flow to low-wage countries and that the only real defense against a falling living standard is for citizens in industrialized countries to improve their education and output. New research, however, supports the notion that a world without labor standards undermines wages and the quality of life in industrialized nations.

In his new book, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?*, Harvard University professor Dani Rodrik convincingly rebuts the legions of mainstream economists who insist that trade between rich and poor nations has had a negligible effect on wages in the United States and Europe. Drawing on fresh data and analysis, Rodrik concludes that "workers now find themselves in an environment in which they can be more easily 'exchanged' for workers in other countries. For those who lack the skills to make themselves hard to replace, the result is greater insecurity and a more precarious existence."

Proponents of global standards for capitalism are quick to point out that they don't favor protectionism, which is the bogeyman in any debate over the international economy. Instead they emphasize the importance of "fair" over "free" trade. This distinction, of course, is partly semantics. By calling themselves "fair" traders, these critics hope to defuse complaints from the center that they are merely protectionists in a new garb.

The AFL-CIO offers a case in point. In revamping its trade strategy recently, the labor federation "sees the most important thing overall as portraying itself as not protectionist," says Barbara Shailor, its top international official. "We want to manage global integration, not stop it."

The trouble is that many people in developing countries—and not just government lackeys—see calls for "fairer" trade as little improvement over the old free trade orthodoxy. "Raising standards will so raise the costs of doing business in poor countries that they will be forced to open their markets without being able to compete, causing more unemployment," says Martin Khor, head of Third World Network, a Malaysian think tank.

Then there is the problem of enforcing even well-intended standards. In Malaysia, for instance, the traditional lands of native peoples are supposed to be protected from unwanted exploitation, but national laws are routinely flouted. The government harasses those natives who seek to enforce the law,

and tries to prevent foreigners from visiting native people who live in areas where protests have occurred.

The story is similar in other developing countries. In the Sichuan province of China, thousands of disgruntled workers staged street demonstrations in July, protesting poor wages and living standards. In Indonesia, the leading trade unionist is under arrest on trumped up charges of insurrection. And in Mexico, the contrast between the laws on the books and the reality on the ground is stark. "Mexico already has beautiful laws, but there is no enforcement," says Luis Rubio, president of the Center of Research for Development in Mexico.

International efforts aimed at pressuring national governments to enforce their own laws have been virtually futile. The International Labor Organization, which is supposed to police violations of worker rights throughout the world, is toothless. And much-ballyhooed efforts, such as the current drive to achieve a global treaty on climate change before the year's end, too often fall prey to political posturing and flimsy goals.

But the very frustrations of forging international accords on labor and the environment are a useful reminder that, even in an age of global capital, the most critical pressure still comes from below. The challenge to globalization will only continue as long as ordinary people—whether in the jungles of Malaysia or the cities of Europe—register their complaints. ■

G. Pascal Zachary writes on labor and economics from Berkeley, Calif.

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Bad Faith

Nothing Sacred

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REVIEWED BY LINDA DELIBERO



Kevin Anderson as Father Ray—a sort of Father Flanagan with attitude—in *Nothing Sacred*.

This past July, the Catholic League of America launched a protest against ABC's *Nothing Sacred*, a drama slated for the network's fall lineup. As with so many media-generated protests by the guardians of moral rectitude in the past, the offended party had not yet seen the show. Prompted by a network press release coyly suggesting that *Nothing Sacred* would be "tackling" the abortion issue via its main character, an "irreverent" priest, the Catholic League reacted on cue and immediately prepared for battle—much to the glee, I'm sure, of the producers, who must certainly know that their little project needs all the publicity it can get. Is it too cynical to suggest that such a response was what they were hoping for all along?

The Catholic League has good reason to raise a ruckus over *Nothing Sacred*. As usual, though, they're worked up for all the wrong reasons. Turns out that the show's treatment of abortion is predictably evasive (and breathtakingly inaccurate, but more on that later). In fact, the real sin here boils down to a

matter of bad drama masquerading as something else. Touted as a serious exploration of the thornier questions of faith, *Nothing Sacred* is about religion the way *Baywatch* is about lifeguarding. If New-Agey confections like *Touched By an Angel* hadn't demonstrated the quick buck to be made in pop spirituality, you can bet your rosary that ABC wouldn't have gone anywhere near this territory.

But ABC, as countless media wags have gloatingly pointed out, is in big trouble, in third place in the ratings and rapidly approaching meltdown. At such times, you can smell the desperation in the air, just as surely as you can see the wheels turning in the brains of all those Armani-clad Suits: "Hey, let's jump on this religion thing, but let's heat it up."

Toss together a hunky priest, a little sex and a couple of hot-button issues like abortion and birth control, promote with the requisite buzzwords like "provocative" and "irreverent," and, kids, we've got ourselves a show.

As it is, *Nothing Sacred* (an unnervingly apt title) is thoroughly emblematic of the schizophrenia that has beset ABC. Under the beleaguered leadership of Jamie Tarses (whose troubled saga as entertainment president is far more, uh, entertaining than any current ABC offering), ABC can't decide whether it's "The Family Network" or a Gen-Xer's wet dream of snide, pop-cultural irony. To wit: Last spring, Tarses pronounced ABC "America's Broadcaster," a homey refuge for heartland viewers; shortly thereafter, she unveiled the notorious "TV is Good" campaign, a corrosive self-parody that trades on the hipster's knowledge that TV is, well, trash—and, more pointedly, not exactly the proper vehicle for promoting family values. "You can talk to your wife any time," flashes one ad in the series. So

much for middle America.

It should come as no surprise that *Nothing Sacred* bears all the markings of an idea conceived in this seething cauldron of corporate confusion: a half-hour or so of flip, smirky dancing around a Big Dilemma—will our hero, sort of a Father Flanagan with attitude, rediscover his faith in God?—followed by 15 minutes of unabashed, reassuring sentiment. Schizoid, yes, with a touch of mania thrown in for good measure.

Father Ray (Kevin Anderson), the liberal pastor of an urban parish, faces an unprecedented spate of problems, the likes of which only writers in the throes of ratings panic could invent. During the course of an episode, he's thrown out of a city council meeting, sabotaged in the confessional by a tape-recording Right-to-Lifer, seduced by an old flame, set upon by hostile yuppies and, worst of all, forced by the Bishop to produce an exegesis on St. Thomas Aquinas' "Proofs for the Existence of God." There's more—a pesky feminist nun, the flame's suicidal stepson, a passel of fiery Latina parishioners—but after the first few crises, you're too dizzy to keep track.

Needless to say, amidst all the hubbub there's not much room for incidentals like character development or careful explication of an idea or two. At a time when too many people are likely to think "pedophilia" when they hear the word "priest," Father Ray is mainly required to prove he's a virile guy, possessed of all the perfectly normal yearnings except that, well, he just can't do anything about them. Hence, he spends most of the show yelling and tossing off smug, angry quips (at one point, he tells a parishioner to "go fax yourself"), or mooning over his lost love and otherwise demonstrating that there's plenty of healthy, masculine urges going on beneath his surplice.

The rest of the time, the writers are mighty proud of the way they're capably subverting all our unenlightened stereotypes about priests. It's the kind of stuff Catholic kids learn at about age 5—that Father Ray drinks, plays poker, even swears ("fax yourself" indeed). When Anderson makes his way to the shower in his Jockeys, you can almost see the writers pointing: "Hey, betcha didn't

know these guys wear their underwear to bed!" The revelation is clearly meant to play as a bit shocking, as if the entire nation—Catholics and non-Catholics alike—were under a mass delusion that priests slept in their vestments.

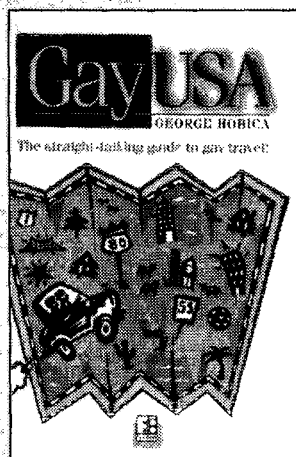
In other words, the show isn't really about humanizing the clergy at all; if you could get the same faintly naughty jolt out of the everyday life of, say, appliance repairmen, you'd have a show about the Maytag guy. Clearly, the creators of *Nothing Sacred* aren't really interested in plumbing the real dilemmas of Catholicism in America today. They're interested in nabbing viewers with trumped up "controversy."

When Father Ray trots out his well-worn doubts, we never find out exactly how he's formed his beliefs, or more to the point, why a guy whose advice in the confessional amounts to "I can't tell you what to do" would become a priest in the first place. The writers don't even bother getting the basic facts straight. When Father Ray is nailed for his non-committal view on abortion, his supervisor remarks, "Sex has always been

your Achilles' heel, Ray." Oh, so all the commotion isn't about conception and the origins of life and all that, it's about the stuff you do *before* you conceive a new life. This might come as a surprise to the Right-to-Life movement, which, I guess, better start thinking up a more appropriate name for itself.

If the Catholic League wants to work itself into a lather over *Nothing Sacred*, it had best turn its attention from the show's treatment of abortion, God and faith. The people who produced, wrote and approved this drama haven't the least stake in any of these things; frankly, they don't care who or what you believe in as long as you watch the show. Their crime is closer to that age-old ecclesiastical sin of simony: the trading of religious artifacts for money. In that regard, *Nothing Sacred* is about a very particular, very contemporary kind of faith after all—the faith of its increasingly desperate creators that TV, even at its most transparently cynical, will always find an audience.

Will viewers buy it this time? Let us pray that they don't. ■



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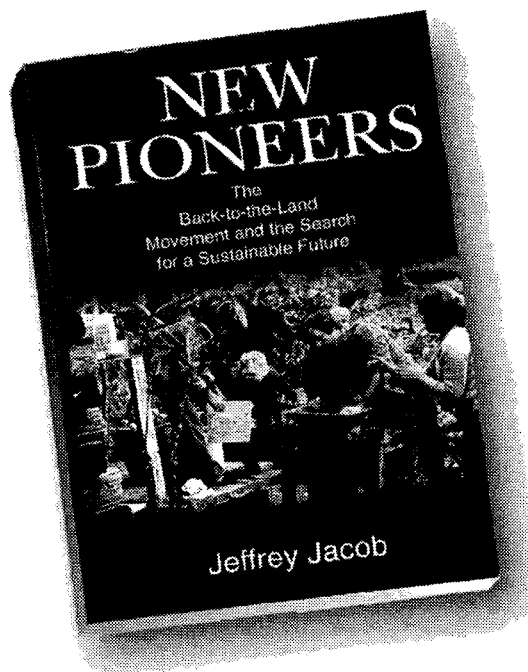
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NEW AGE FARMERS

**New Pioneers:
The Back-to-the-Land
Movement and the Search
for a Sustainable Future**

By Jeffrey Jacob
Penn State Press
262 pp., \$26.50



REVIEWED BY JENNY SCHUESSLER

"All men," Emerson wrote, "keep the farm in reserve as an asylum where, in case of mischance, to hide their poverty—or solitude, if they do not succeed in society." In *New Pioneers*, Canadian sociologist Jeffrey Jacob takes the measure of North America's most recent wave of rural asylum-seekers—hundreds of thousands of discontented urbanites who he estimates have headed "back to the land" since the '60s to be born again as modern versions of Thomas Jefferson's yeomen farmers. In Jacob's view, the back-to-the-landers are not only seeking refuge for themselves but therapy for a society run amok. As he writes in his introduction, "The sustainability principles advocated by, but not peculiar to, the back-to-the-landers hold out the promise of rehabilitating the national character."

In Jefferson's view, there was a crucial precondition for the "agrarian serenity" enjoyed by the Virginia farmers whom he saw as forming the moral bedrock of the republic: "one act of self-denial, to put off buying anything till he has the money to pay for it." Translated into the modern jargon of Jacob's back-to-the-landers, this becomes the twin ideals of "sustainability" and "voluntary simplicity"—the refusal to borrow luxu-

ry, or even ordinary middle-class comfort, against the future of the earth.

The chapters describing the practical concerns of aspiring self-sustainers are the most interesting, though they would be considerably livelier if Jacob appreciated the potentially comic aspects of earth song festivals, Seattle's "Zoo Doo" recycling program, autodentistry performed with homemade beer for anesthetic ("homesteading carried to its logical conclusion," Jacob says inanely), and lines like this: "Composting toilets ... may provide their owner-operators with only modest amounts of compost, but they allow ... 'a dramatic view of one's fecal matter at close range.'" But Jacob is a social scientist, and a systematic, statistical analysis of the movement is the main game here.

So just who are these people that Jacob sees pointing the way forward—or is it back? In order to avoid a sample representing anyone who lives in the country and has a garden, Jacob limits his definition of "new pioneers" to "individuals and families who are interested in self-reliant living on their own land." This sounds like a net that in areas like the Pacific Northwest, where he gathered much of his anecdotal material, could snag right-wing survivalists and other decidedly non-granola types,

but Jacob assures us he came across none. But then, the centerpiece of his research was a questionnaire filled out by subscribers to *Countryside*, an alternative lifestyle magazine not unlike *Martha Stewart Living* in its chipper, can-do idealism. In addition to earnest testimonials to the joys of life "beyond the sidewalks," the magazine runs features on "ol' Shep" (farm dogs ain't what they used to be), "dual purpose miniature cattle" (only three feet tall!) and 101 uses for a corncob (they're not just for outhouses anymore). The equally charming and loony ads—"They gasped when I sprayed beer on my lawn! But you should see my golf-course green grass now!"—bear a resemblance to the more improbable claims made for anti-cellulite creams in the back of *Cosmo*.

Never mind that *Countryside*, however beguiling, hardly resembles a blueprint for setting up a viable commercial farm. Jacob, who describes becoming fascinated with the glossier but similar *Mother Earth News* in the '70s, during breaks from his research on the shoeshine boys of Guatemala City, is more interested in the "back-to-the-country state of mind." At first glance, Jacob's 700 respondents from six scattered states look pretty much like gener-

ic middle Americans—predominantly Protestant, middle-class and evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans (Jacob is silent on race, but you get the sense they're almost all white). But given the sort of practitioners of "alternative agriculture" that Jacob set out to pin down, it's not surprising what's on the neo-agrarian's minds. Seventy-five percent report feeling moments of "union with nature" often or very often. Ninety-three percent "sympathize with activist groups" (though only 68 percent "see the need" for them). More than twice as many considered "human rights in the Third World" to be important as considered "having a microwave oven" important.

What's more surprising is what's going on—or not going on—down on the farm. While the respondents manage to grow an average of a third of their own food, nearly 20 percent are retirees supported by Social Security and private pensions. Another 44 percent are "weekenders" with full-time employment and an average commute of 50 miles a day. Jacob claims that most work out of economic necessity, but 82 percent say they are satisfied with their employment. A mere 5 percent are either "purists," who grow only enough of a cash crop "to survive in a monetized economy" (and brag about not owing any income tax), or full-time, small-scale "microfarmers," who grow high-value specialty crops, such as the baby lettuce one urban sod-buster peddles to Seattle restaurants for \$24 a pound.

Jacob never considers one key question: How descriptive of "neo-agrarianism" is a sample that admittedly excludes "large-scale farmers who produce just a few specialty crops," but includes weekend organic gardeners with full-time "urban sinecures" (as Jacob often refers to conventional jobs)?

It's hard to see how retirees and ex-urbanites who espouse "sustainability" but can't grow enough food to sustain themselves, let alone any portion of the non-farming public, has much to tell us about the future of American agriculture. Small farms hardly seem to be the wave of the future. The sad fact is that since the early '80s, the United States has lost nearly 2,000 small farms a week; in 1993, the Census Bureau

declared farmers "statistically insignificant" and just stopped counting them.

While Jacob does suggest some policy reforms to tilt the fields in favor of the small holder (green taxes on chemical fertilizers, replacement of Most Favored Nation with Most Sustainable Nation trade status, lower income taxes for the poor to offset inevitably higher food prices), his claim for the importance of the back-to-the-land experiment in living rests on moral and, especially, "spiritual" grounds. Amazingly, Jacob declares that sustainability is "a state of mind as much as or more than a matter of practice"—as if serious questions about survival were less important than the care of the souls.

Jacob sees the back-to-the-landers as avatars of the quasi-Buddhist virtues of "mindfulness" and "right livelihood." But his accounts of anguished decisions about whether to opt for the "convenience" of a washing machine or the "simplicity" of hand-washing, fail to consider how women have tried to liberate themselves from the dreary mindlessness of such chores. He glosses over female respondents' complaints about the "less-than-ideal division of labor," as he delicately puts it. That inequity, he writes, is merely a "short-term injustice" that one partner is "likely to tolerate" as the cost of higher goals.

But then, in Jacob's view, "self-sufficient" communion with the land—with the "self" taken quite literally—may be even more important than messy personal relationships built on "the perishable good will of peers." He offers the cautionary tale of a woman whose husband stopped helping around the home-

stead the week after the wedding. "I should've known better than to marry a city boy," she laments—as if "the city" were to blame.

The neo-homesteaders might look more attractive if they didn't have to bear the freight of Jacob's messianic faith in them. Their homesteads could be examined less as a "simple," mystically healing communion with the land and more as an ordinary pursuit of happiness. Besides, is the farmer's relationship with the land really ever so simple?

Those seeking an antidote to Jacob's well-intentioned but unsustainable sentimentalism would do well to read Victor Davis Hanson's recent *Fields Without Dreams: Defending The Agrarian Idea*, an apocalyptic memoir about his efforts to defend his ancestral raisin farm in the San Joaquin Valley against the forces of flood and foreclosure. A far cry from goat-toting small holders who show up at urban greenmarkets (or agricultural "petting zoos," as he calls them), Hanson takes an almost comically agonistic vision of the farming life. His vision of the true agrarian spirit—the "craggy, unpleasant octogenarian" with crusty overalls and procrustean opinions—is equal parts compelling and repellent. While Jacob sees his small holders as part of history's paradoxical vanguard, Hanson has no illusions that the small American farmer is anything but an endangered species—or that a cuddly fantasy about the past has much to tell us about the world to come. ■

Jenny Schuessler is an assistant editor at The New York Review of Books.

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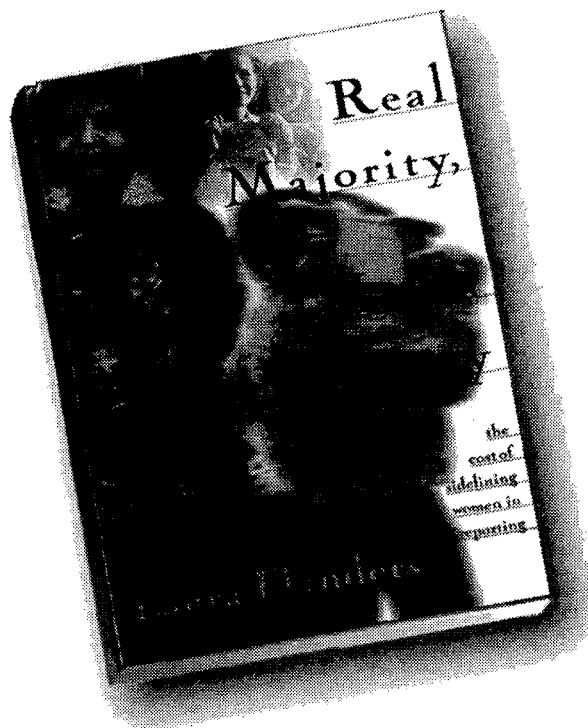
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Seen But Not Heard

**Real Majority, Media Minority:
The Cost of Sidelining Women in Reporting**
By Laura Flanders
Common Courage Press
275 pp., \$16.95



REVIEWED BY JENNIFER L. MONEY

As a newspaper editor, I recently had a reporter turn in a story with the good news that a company was volunteering to remove a leaky underground petroleum storage tank. The quotes came from the company representative, so I asked the reporter to go back out and talk to residents. The next day, he stumbled upon the same spokesman trying to soothe angry citizens on their front porches. Turned out, state tests had shown contaminants had spread in a wide radius from the tank. The reporter wrote a very different story than the first one he turned in.

Mainstream media too often fail to ask the right questions—or even any question—of the people who shape the news and those who are affected by events, Laura Flanders writes in *Real Majority, Media Minority: The Cost of Sidelining Women in Reporting*. The people not asked, she reports, are most often women.

In *Real Majority*, Flanders nails the mainstream media for excluding more than 50 percent of the population from the discussion of 100 percent of the issues. The book compiles a

decade of Flanders' work as the head of the Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) Women's Desk and as host and executive producer of FAIR's nationally syndicated radio program, "CounterSpin."

In transcripts of her radio interviews, essays from FAIR's magazine, *Extra!*, and speeches, Flanders targets multinational media moguls and attacks the way the mainstream media leave women and women's concerns out of coverage of issues from rape and health care to economics.

She talks, for instance, to Sgt. Carol Picou, a Gulf War veteran whose health and life have been permanently damaged by Gulf War Syndrome, the mysterious illness that has affected as many as 20,000 veterans. Long articles in several mainstream magazines featured only male victims, Flanders points out, although around 30,000 women served in the war. One magazine ordered a reporter who had originally planned a feature on Picou to focus instead on birth defects of babies born to women who had fought in the Persian Gulf. This cast women as reliable sources only in their roles as

moms, not as warriors, Flanders says.

At the NGO (Nongovernmental Organization) Forum on Women in China in 1995, Flanders saw how the world press focused on controversy over the Chinese security forces rather than on what the women had to say. And when reporters did cover what participants said, it was generally when celebrities spoke or when women were telling personal stories. "The big cameras ... left when women were giving analysis of things like the global economy or the rise of the right. We want women seen but we also want them heard," Flanders said when she spoke at the forum.

In a 1995 essay in *Extra!*, reprinted in *Real Majority*, Flanders points out an especially glaring example of sidelining women in coverage of the news. A *New York Times* article that reported the Oklahoma City bombing ran an accompanying list, "Other Bombings in America." While the list spanned four decades and included some attacks that resulted in no injuries or lives lost, it failed to mention 40 bombings, some with fatalities, of women's clinics in that time.

While the *New York Times* is one of Flanders' favorite targets, other mainstream newspapers also fall under her scrutiny. A *Washington Post* story on the genital mutilation of a 10-year-old girl in Egypt in 1994 said the practice is "called genital mutilation by opponents and female circumcision by its advocates." Then the *Post* headlined the story, "4 Men Arrested in Circumcision of 10-year-old Girl."

Of course, for an industry that until 1971 relegated all of its female members to the balcony of the National Press Club, anecdotal revelations about sexism in the news are hardly news. But more than a quarter century after women started fighting for equal representation, it is surprising to see how few female voices show up in the mainstream media source pool in coverage of health care, economics, crime, gay and lesbian issues, welfare and abortion rights. Flanders cites a FAIR survey from December 1, 1994, to February 24, 1995, which found that in welfare coverage 71 percent of the sources quoted in a half-dozen major media outlets were male. The few women quoted were either politicians or politicians' staffers—rarely welfare recipients or those who devote their time to working with welfare recipients one-on-one.

While the number of women in mainstream media—reporters, editors and newsmakers—has climbed in the past few decades, Flanders argues that it's been one step forward and three steps back all the way.

Take Anna Quindlen, who made history as the *New York Times*' first female deputy metro editor in 1983 and the first woman to write the paper's prestigious "About New York" column. Her tenure at the *Times*, which began in 1977 as a city reporter, came only after a handful of female predecessors in the lower ranks of the newsroom paved the road by waging war on the patriarchal system at the *Times* with a painful and drawn-out discrimination suit that began in 1974.

Regrettably for those of us who cherished her feminist viewpoint on the op-ed pages of the Great Gray Lady, Quindlen left the daily grind to take up novel writing in 1994. Quindlen once

wrote that many op-ed pages operate with a female "quota of one," Flanders recalls. The *Times*, however, used a quota of "one at most."

"After Quindlen's departure," writes Flanders, "it took the op-ed page six months to add another woman to the regular roster. ... One might have thought that with seven men and no women writing regular columns during this period, the editors might have made an extra effort to seek out female guest columnists. Think again: Out of 330 op-eds by outside writers, 278, or 84 percent, were by men."

It's not just a matter of putting women in the stories and on the op-ed pages that will change the shape of the news, Flanders writes, it's a question of which women. Gen-X lawyer-turned-television-news-analyst Laura Ingraham draws scathing derision from Flanders. She then devotes a whole chapter to rebutting the spurious claims in Christina Hoff Sommers' book, *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*.

While the primary audience of *Real*

Majority will probably say, "Amen, sister," unfortunately the people who need Flanders' constructive criticism most—reporters and editors in the mainstream media—aren't likely to pick the book up. Those who do will applaud and be appalled at the same time.

The essays are particularly compelling, but the radio interviews, which include sessions with some leading feminist authors and activists, are a little stilted on the printed page. But together, the pieces drive home her common theme: Today's mainstream journalists are not motivated enough or critical enough to take on the status quo or corporate owners and advertisers. Reporters and editors are only too happy to be spoon-fed PR and do not go out of their way to find a new angle or story.

How can journalists make their coverage fairer? Going the extra mile to include the voices of women, Flanders says, would be a good place to start. ■

Jennifer L. Money is a newspaper writer and editor in North Carolina.


God's Long Summer

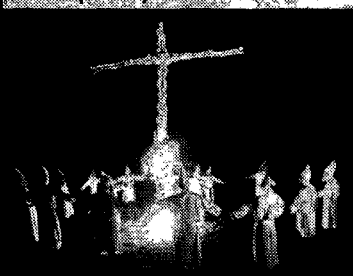
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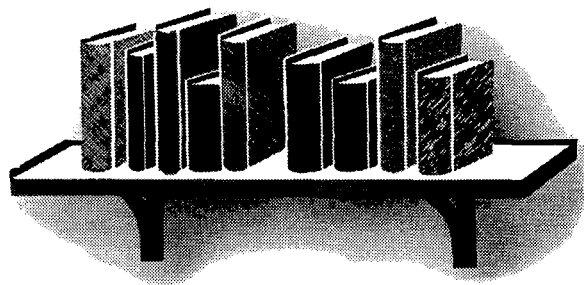
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Studying Whiteness

REVIEWED BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

From the depths of academic obscurity comes a new brand of scholarship that examines white supremacy. An outgrowth of postmodern cultural studies, particularly critical race theory, this emerging discipline has been dubbed "whiteness studies" or "critical white studies."

Authors in this field intend to examine the phenomenon of "whiteness" as a social, historical and political process; how its development is related to the ascendancy of race as a gauge of human value; and how assumptions of white supremacy have become normalized—ubiquitous yet seemingly invisible.

Mainstream media generally have been derisive and defensive about this emerging field, but the publication of these three new books may help alter that attitude.

**Critical White Studies:
Looking Behind the Mirror**
Edited by Richard Delgado
and Jean Stefaniec
Temple University Press
680 pp., \$29.95

Critical White Studies is a massive compendium of the latest scholarship on whiteness. The editors, both professors at the University of Colorado Law School and leading figures in the "critical race theory" movement, present a bewildering array of perspectives on whiteness as well as a number of classic works on related subjects. Thus, the book includes both the views of Dinesh D'Souza, a conservative critic of multiculturalism, and those of Noel Ignatiev, co-editor of *Race Traitor* magazine, who suggests that the only way to end racism is to challenge the hidden privi-

leges of whiteness until the concept of "white" itself falls apart.

Derrick A. Bell, Barbara J. Flagg, Eric Foner, Andrew Hacker, John B. Judis, Peggy McIntosh, Toni Morrison, David Roediger, Gregory Williams and Roger Wilkins are also among the 114 contributors. Since the editors are law professors, they give special emphasis to white supremacy's legal ramifications. Other categories include "How Whites See Themselves," "Whiteness: History's Role," "White Privilege," "Biology and Pseudoscience" and "What Then Shall We Do? A Role for Whites."

Though a bit unwieldy, this book will be valuable to anyone thinking seriously about race relations.

Whiteness: A Critical Reader
Edited by Mike Hill
New York University Press
359 pp., \$21.95

This effort is similar but more accessible and easier on the biceps than the anthology compiled by Delgado and Stefaniec. Hill includes 21 essays in his volume and, although this is a new field of study, only two contributors (Ignatiev and Roediger) appear in both books. Hill, an assistant professor of English at Marymount Manhattan College, divides this work into four sections: "White Politics," "White Culture," "White Bodies" and "White Minds."

The book's treatment of culture is particularly luminous. In an essay entitled "The Whiteness of Film Noir," Eric Lott deconstructs a beloved cinematic genre to demonstrate the white supremacist conceits at its core. In "Story Untold: The Black Men and White Sounds of Doo-Wop," Jeffery Melnick makes a fascinating, though ultimately unconvincing, argument that this influential but unheralded musical style has

become deracinated from its black cultural roots.

White
By Richard Dyer
Routledge
250 pp., \$17.95

If the two anthologies aren't enough whiteness for you, British academic Richard Dyer adds another take. A professor of film studies at the University of Warwick and a widely published film critic, Dyer is concerned with visual representations. "Racial imagery is central to the organization of the modern world," he begins. "At what cost regions and countries export their goods, whose voices are listened to at international gatherings, who bombs and who is bombed, who gets what jobs, housing, access to health care and education, what cultural activities are subsidized and sold, in what terms they are validated—these are all largely inextricable from racial imagery."

From there, he presents compelling examples of photography and film that reveal the West's investment in normalizing whiteness. Uncovering broad similarities between whiteness construction in Europe and the United States, Dyer shows that a transatlantic cadre of scholars is engaged in this productive enterprise of interrogating white supremacy and its corrosive effects.

Because *White* has a unifying theme and a single author, it is more coherent than the two anthologies. Even seemingly tangential concerns are thematically woven into the overall argument. For example, Dyer discusses Christianity's role in this project of whiteness, including how the Crusades racialized the idea of Christendom. This book overflows with such perceptive and provocative arguments. ■

Classifieds

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Continued from page 38

of despair, puffed up with hot air/He's serious, pretentious and I just don't care/Don Henley must die!/Don't let him get back together with Glenn Frey!"

Insulting rock icon Don Henley and The Eagles' hallowed reputation is only the beginning. Nixon's rant, "Bring Me the Head of David Geffen," assaults the music-industry baron. Screaming over top racing guitars, Mojo cries, "He's just selling one great big lie.../Liar! Liar! He killed rock 'n' roll/He killed funk and soul."

Geffen might be a nice guy in person, Nixon admits, but he and his cohorts are responsible for the pabulum known as Top 40, events like Woodstock '94, and reunions of bands like Aerosmith that had their day but are being propped up and resurrected solely to cash in and cash out, leaving better bands with better messages out of the money. And the spotlight.

His former record label, Blutarski, quailed at putting the Geffen tune on CD and yanked it at the last moment. But it shows up on his latest CD, "Gadzooks!!! The Homemade Bootleg" (Needletime Records), which features a 17-song batch of career outtakes, oddities and new tunes.

Mojo didn't always take on the high and mighty armed only with a loud guitar and a big mouth. He entered this world as Neil Kirby McMillan Jr. He was born in North Carolina and raised in proper, suburban Danville, Va. At Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in the late '70s, he was just "Kirby," a long-haired, occasional campus radical, wild partier and free thinker who founded one of the first campus punk bands. But Mojo Nixon was taking shape even then, in that grand American tradition of personal reinvention.

A few years out of college, he had what he calls "the Mojo revelation." He changed his name (now the only people who call him Kirby are his wife and his mom), he strapped on a guitar full-time, and he cranked up what he calls "the psycho knob," letting his id run loose across the land. "The original idea," he says, "was to mix a little John Lee Hooker, Richard Pryor and Hunter S. Thompson, get a boogie-woogie beat going, and rant and rave."

Today Nixon plays a ferocious and capable guitar, firing off rockabilly riffs as his nimble Toadliquor bass player and drummer shore him up with high-decibel sound and crashing rhythms.

He has been touring to promote the new CD, which includes odes to Richard Petty, Winnebago and his usual incorrigible anthems about booze and sex. The CD also features the occasional piece of quieter, front-porch Americana, like the moody "Go Back Home" ("Wanna go back where the trees are green/Ain't no hipsters makin' no scene..."), part of a trail of evidence sprinkled throughout the 39-year-old Mojo's brash career that beneath the bluster lies one of those intense singer-songwriters he mercilessly harpoons.

But even in quieter mode, he pushes the pop-music envelope. Consider the funky little ballad, "Are You Drinkin' With Me, Jesus?" It features tasty guitars, nifty harmonica and outrageous lyrics: "Shall we take a cab home, Jesus?/Shit, man, we can hoof it from here/I know you can walk on the water/But can you walk on this much beer?"

You won't be hearing such tunes on MTV. When the music

channel was in its youth, however, Nixon hosted MTV's spring-break specials. "I did lots of things for them, hosted this, hosted that," he says. "I made it perfectly clear that if I do all this stuff for you, you'd play my video."

Then Nixon got Debbie Gibson pregnant with his two-headed love child.

The programmers got a whiff of the music video, which made fun of the white-bread pop singer (as played by Winona Ryder, who called it "my favorite role to date"), that once-famous beer-selling bull terrier Spuds Mackenzie and other MTV income generators. MTV had all sorts of polite excuses for deep-sixing the offending video, but Nixon says he crossed the corporate line in the sand when he made fun of advertisers.

These days, he realizes he never had a chance at being an MTV star. "Looking back now, I was deluding myself," he says. "Come push to shove, I wasn't going to stop saying 'motherfucker' in the shows, and stop playing 'Burn Down the Malls' and 'Don Henley Must Die.' And the shit I say live is twice as psychotic as what I put on records."

So he continues to work the vein that Mojo Nixon calls home. "What I'm doing is never gonna translate across the board. It's not like Hootie and the Blowfish—music to vacuum to," he says. "My whole career is an attempt to fart in the face of my mother and her blue-nose Wednesday night Junior Women's Club uptight Puritan friends."

In other words—it's only rock 'n' roll.

He's still a little surprised he's getting away with it. "The fact that I have any career at all is amazing," Nixon says. "Four hundred years ago, the king would have had me killed." ■

Douglas Imbrogno is a writer in West Virginia who first wrote about Kirby McMillan at Miami University.

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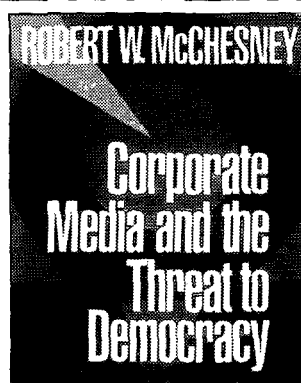
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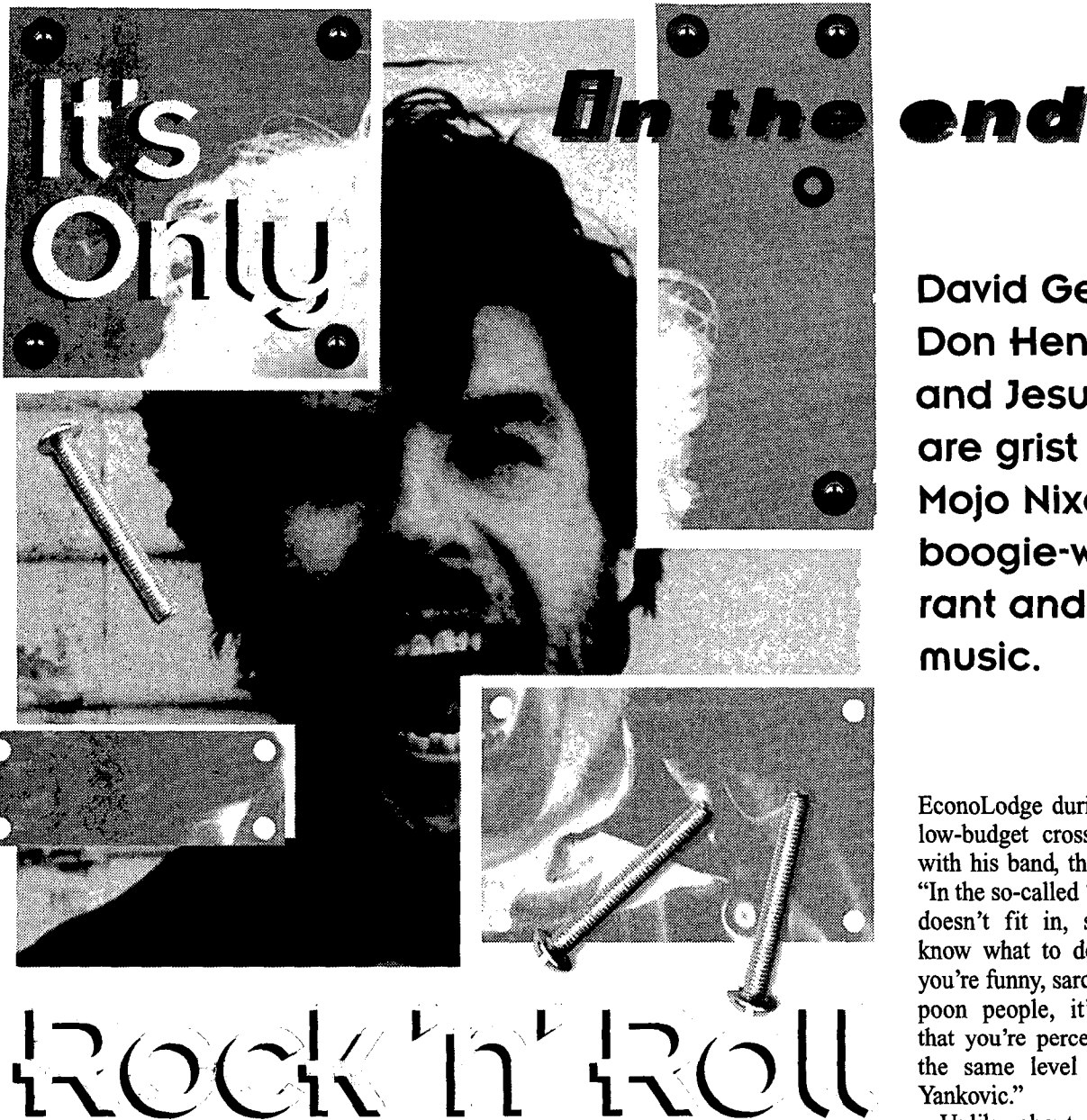
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BY DOUGLAS IMBROGNO

Banned, marginalized, unrepentant and living to offend, Mojo Nixon occupies a small but significant niche in the current rock scene. He's either its conscience or its crazy uncle who gets drunk at Thanksgiving and tips the dinner table over while singing "We Shall Overcome."

From his song titles alone, you can tell Mojo Nixon has a bone to pick with America: "Burn Down the Malls," "I Hate Banks," "Don Henley Must Die," "Destroy All Lawyers," "Bring Me the Head of David Geffen." Then there's his tender side, such as the tune with one of the greatest pop song titles ever—"Debbie Gibson Is Pregnant With My Two Headed Love Child."

That last one was banned from MTV in 1989 (not that most of his other songs had ever been welcomed there, although "Elvis Is Everywhere" was once a novelty hit).

"In music, there's a great tradition of being funny and crazy," says Nixon, hunkered down in a Cincinnati

political content often rear their heads at his roaring, tent revival-on-acid shows, along with enough scatology and irreverence to rival a Red Foxx nightclub performance.

Nixon often trains his double-barreled sights on corporate bozos and the mass-culture marketing machine, reserving some buckshot for injustices we've become accustomed to—overpaid, over-powerful lawyers, for instance—but which pop bands rarely sing about. Nixon says he's trying to serve a richer dish than just high-decibel, abrasive rock 'n' roll. He's dead serious now for a man who wrote "The Poontango" ("It's a very sexy dance/You don't need any pants"). "I'd like to think of myself on the same level as H.L. Mencken and Jonathan Swift," he says.

While his songs will probably not become required reading in English 101, his lyrics do sting. In "Don Henley Must Die," he sings: "He's a tortured artist/Used to be in the Eagles/Now he whines like a wounded beagle/Poet

Continued on page 37

David Geffen,
Don Henley
and Jesus Christ
are grist for
Mojo Nixon's
boogie-woogie
rant and rave
music.

EconoLodge during one recent low-budget cross-country tour with his band, the Toadliquors. "In the so-called 'rock world,' it doesn't fit in, so they don't know what to do with me. If you're funny, sarcastic and lampoon people, it's unfortunate that you're perceived to be on the same level as Weird Al Yankovic."

Unlike about 97 percent of the rock acts cruising the land, biting cultural commentary and